

A

FARTHER APPEAL

TO MEN OF

REASON AND RELIGION.

By *JOHN WESLEY*, M. A.
Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, Oxford.

P A R T II.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet,
and shew my People their Transgression, and the
House of Jacob their Sins. Isaiah lviii. 1.*

L O N D O N:

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BY JOHN W. L. M. A.



By the Author of 'The History of the British Museum', and 'The History of the British Museum', and 'The History of the British Museum'.

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P A R T II.

I. 1. **I**T is not my present design to touch on any particular Opinions, whether they are right or wrong: nor on any of those smaller points of practice, which are variously held by men of different persuasions: but first, to point out some things which on common principles are condemned by men of every denomination, and yet found in all; and secondly, some wherein those of each denomination, are more particularly inconsistent with their own principles.

And, first, it is my design, abstracting from Opinions of every kind, as well as from disputable points of practice, to mention such of those things as occur to my mind, which are on common principles condemned, and notwithstanding found, more or less, among men of every denomination.

2. But before I enter on this unpleasing task, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, by whatever love you bear to God, to your country, to your own souls; do not consider who speaks, but what is spoken. If it be possible, for one hour

lay prejudice aside; give what is advanced a fair hearing. Consider simply on each head, is this true, or is it false? Is it reasonable, or is it not? if you ask, "But in whose judgment?" I answer, In your own; I appeal to the light of your own mind. Is there not a faithful witness in your own breast? By this you must stand or fall. You cannot be judged by another man's conscience. Judge for yourself by the best light you have. And the merciful God teach me and thee whatsoever we know not!

Now, as I speak chiefly to those who believe the scriptures, the method I propose is this, first, To observe what account is given therein of the Jews, the antient church of God, inasmuch as all these things were written for our instruction, who say, we are now the visible church of the God of Israel. Secondly, To appeal to all who profess to be members thereof, to every one who is called a Christian, How far, in each instance, the parallel holds? And how much we are better than they?

3. First, I am to observe what account the scriptures give of the Jews, the antient church of God. I mean, with regard to their moral character; their tempers and outward behaviour.

No sooner were they brought out of Egypt, than we find them murmuring against God, (Exod. xiv. 12.) Again, when he had just brought them through the Red Sea with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, (c. xv. 24.) And yet again, quickly after, in the wilderness of Zin, your murmurings (saith Moses) are not against us, but against the Lord, (c. xvi. 8.) Nay, even while he was giving them bread from heaven, they were still murmuring and tempting God, (c. xviii. 2, 3.) and their amazing language at that season was, *Is the Lord among us or not?* (c. xvii. 4.)

The same spirit they shewed, during the whole forty years that he bore their manners in the wilderness: a solemn testimony whereof, Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel, when
God

God was about to take him away from their head :
 “ They have corrupted themselves (saith he) their
 spot was not of his children ; they are a perverse
 and crooked generation. The Lord led Jacob
 about ; he instructed him ; he kept him as the
 apple of his eye, (Deut. xxxii. 5. 10.) He made
 him ride on the high places of the earth, that he
 might eat the increase of the fields : then he for-
 sook God which made him, and lightly esteemed
 the Rock of his salvation,” (c. v. 11, 13. 15.)

In like manner God complains long after this,
 “ Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth ! I have
 nourished and brought up children, and they have
 rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner,
 and the ass his master’s crib : but Israel doth not
 know, my people do not consider. Ah sinful
 nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil
 doers, children that are corrupters, they have for-
 saken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One
 of Israel,” (Isa. i. 2, 3, 4.) “ Can a maid forget
 her ornaments, and a bride her attire ? Yet my
 people have forgotten me, days without number,”
 (Jer. ii. 32.)

4. And as they did not like to retain God in their
 knowledge, so they had small regard to the ordi-
 nances of God. “ Even from the days of your
 fathers, (said God by his prophets) ye are gone
 away from my ordinances, and have not kept
 them, (Mal. iii. 7.) Ye have said, It is in vain to
 serve God ; and what profit is it that we have kept
 his ordinances ?” (v. 13.) “ Thou hast not called
 upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of
 me, O Israel : thou hast not brought me my burnt-
 offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy
 sacrifices,” (Isa. xlv. 22, 23.) And so the prophet
 himself confesses, “ Thou meetest those that re-
 member Thee in thy ways—But there is none
 that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up him-
 self to take hold of Thee,” (Isa. lxi. 5, 7.)

5. But they called upon his name by vain oaths,
 by perjury and blasphemy. So Jeremiah, “ Be-

cause of swearing the land mourneth, (c. xxliii. 10.) And though they say, The Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely," (c. v. 2.) So Hosea, "They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant:" so Ezekiel, "They say the Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." So Isaiah, "Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory," (c. iii. 8.) They say, "Let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One draw nigh and come that we may know it," c. v. 19. And so Malachi, "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words; ye say, every one that doeth evil, is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; and, where is the God of judgment?" (c. ii. 17.)

6. And as they *despised his holy things*, so they *prophaned his sabbaths*, (Ezek. xxii. 8.) Yea, when God sent unto them, saying, "Take heed unto yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers:—yet they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction," (Jer. xvii. 21, 22, 23.)

Neither did they honour their parents, or those whom God, from time to time, appointed to be rulers over them. "In thee (in Jerusalem, said the prophet) they have set light by father and mother," (Ezek. xxii. 7.) And from the very day when God brought them up out of the land of Egypt, their murmurings, chiding, rebellion and disobedience; against those whom he had chosen to go before them, make the most considerable part of their history. So that had not Moses stood in the gap, he had even destroyed them from the face of the earth.

7. How much more did they afterwards provoke God, by drunkenness, sloth, and luxury? "They have erred through wine, (saith the prophet Isaiah) and through strong drink they are gone out of the way;"

way;" (c. xxviii. 7.) which occasioned those vehement and repeated warnings, against that reigning sin; "Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, them that are overcome with wine, (ver. 1.) the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot: (v. 3.) woe unto them that rise up early that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflames them.—But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands, (c. v. 11, 12.) woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; (v. 22.) woe to them that are at ease in Zion,—that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and their calves out of the midst of the stall, that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick,—that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," (Amos vi. 1. 4, 5, 6.) "Behold this (saith Ezekiel to Jerusalem) was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: fulness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters," (c. xvi. 49.)

8. From sloth and fulness of bread, lewdness naturally followed. It was even while Moses was with them, that the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab: yea, of the daughters of Zion, Isaiah complains, "they walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes," (c. iii. 16.) And of his people in general God complains by Jeremiah, "When I had fed them to the full, they assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's house. They were as fed horses in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbour's wife, (c. v. 7, 8.) they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men, (c. ix. 2.) the land is full of adulterers," (c. xxiii. 10.)

Yea, and some of them were given up to unnatural lusts. Thus we read, Judges xix. 22, "The men of Gibeah beset the house, wherein the stranger

stranger was, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, saying, bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him." And there were also long after, Sodomites in the land, in the days of Rehoboam and of the following kings: "The very shew of whose countenance witnessed against them, and they declared their sin as Sodom, they hid it not," (Isa. iii. 9.)

9. This was accompanied with injustice in all its forms. Thus all the prophets testify against them, "The Lord looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry," (Isa. v. 7.) "Thou hast taken usury and increase; thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbour by extortion.—Behold, I have smitten my hand, at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made," (Ezek. xxii. 12, 13.) "The balances of deceit are in Jacob's hand; he loveth to oppress," (Hos. xii. 7.) "Are there not yet the scant measure that is abominable; the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?" (Mic. vi. 10, 11.) "He that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey," (Isa. lix. 15.) And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment. The wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he. They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag, (Hab. i. 13, 14, 15.) They covet fields and take them by violence, and houses, and take them away, (Mic. ii. 2.) they pull off the robe with the garment, from them that pass by securely, (v. 8.) they have dealt by oppression with the stranger; they have vexed the fatherless and the widow, (Ezek. xxxii. 7.) the people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery; and have vexed the poor and needy, yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully, (v. 29.) their works are works of iniquity, and the acts of violence is in their hands, (Isa. lix. 6.) Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter, (v. 14.)

10. Truth.

10. Truth indeed was fallen, as well as justice. "Every mouth, saith Isaiah, speaketh folly, (c. ix. 17.) this is a rebellious people, lying children, (c. xxx. 9.) their lips have spoken lies and muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth; they trust in vanity and speak lies, (c. lix. 3, 4.) This occasioned that caution of Jeremiah, Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with flanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity," (c. ix. 4, 5.)

11. And even those who abstained from these gross outward sins, were still inwardly corrupt and abominable. "The whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint; yea, from the sole of the foot even unto the head there was no soundness, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores, (Isa. i. 5, 6.) All these nations (saith God) are uncircumcised; and all the houses of Israel are uncircumcised in heart, (Jer. ix. 26.) Their heart is divided, (Hos. x. 2.) They have set up their idols in their heart; they are all estranged from me through their idols," (Ezek. xiv. 3, 4.)

Their soul still clave unto the dust. They laid up treasures upon earth. "From the least of them, saith Jeremiah, even unto the greatest, every one is given to covetousness, (c. vi. 13.) They panted after the dust of the earth, (Amos ii. 7.) They laded themselves with thick clay, (Hab. iii. 6.) They joined house to house, and laid field to field, until there was no place, (Isa. v. 8.) Yea, they enlarged their desires as hell: they were as death, and could not be satisfied," (Hab. ii. 5.)

12. And not only for their covetousness, but for their pride of heart were they an abomination to the Lord. "The pride of Israel, saith Hosea, doth testify to his face, (c. vii. 10.) hear ye, give ear, saith

saith Jeremiah, be not proud—Give glory to the Lord your God, (c. xiii. 15.) But they would not be reprov'd; they were still wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight, (Isa. v. 21.) and continually saying to their neighbour, stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou!" (Isa. lxxv. 5.)

They added hypocrisy to their pride. "This people, saith God himself, draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me, (Isa. xxix. 13.) They have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds, (Hos. vii. 14.) They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a deceitful bow, (v. 16.) They did but flatter him with their mouth, and dissemble with him in their tongue, (Psal. lxxviii. 36.) so that herein they only prophaned the holiness of the Lord. And this have ye done again, saith Malachi, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regarded not the offering any more," (c. ii. 11. 13.)

13. This God continually declared to those formal worshippers. That their outside religion was but vain. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.—When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear, (Isa. i. 11. 13. 15.) He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck, (c. lxvi. 3.) When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer an oblation, I will not accept it, (Jer. xiv. 12.) Go ye, serve your idols, if ye will not

not hearken unto me ; but pollute ye my holy Name no more with your gifts," (Ezek. xx. 39.)

14. Yet all this time they were utterly careless and secure ; nay, confident of being in the favour of God. " They were at ease ; they put far away the evil day, (Amos vi. 1. 3.) Even when God had poured his anger upon Israel, it set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not : it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart, (Isa. xlii. 25.) A deceived heart had turned him aside, that he could not say, is there not a lie in my right hand ? (c. xliv. 10.) So far from it, that at this very time they said, We are innocent, we have not sinned, (Jer. ii. 35. 37.) We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us, (c. viii. 8.) The temple of the Lord ! the temple of the Lord are we," (c. vii. 4.)

15. Thus it was that they hardened themselves in their wickedness. " They are impudent children, saith God, and stiff-hearted, (Ezek. ii. 4.) Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination ? Nay they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush, (Jer. vi. 15.) I have spread out my hand all the day to a rebellious people, that provoketh me to anger continually to my face, (Isa. lxxv. 2, 3.) They will not hearken unto me, saith the Lord, for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted, (Ezek. iii. 7.) Since the day that their fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto them all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them ; yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck ; they did worse than their fathers," (Jer. vi. 25, 26.)

They were equally hardened against mercies and judgments. When he gave them rain, both the former and the latter in his season ; when he reserved unto them the appointed weeks of the harvest, filling their hearts with food and gladness, still none of this revolting and rebellious people said, " let us now fear the Lord our God," (Jer. v. 23, 24.) " Nor yet did they turn unto him when
he

he smote them, (c. ix. 9. 13.) "In that day did the Lord call to weeping and to mourning: and behold joy and gladness, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die," (c. xxii. 11, 12.) "Although he consumed them, yet they refused to receive instruction; they made their faces harder than a rock—None repented him, but every one turned to his course, as a horse rusheth into the battle," (Jer. v. 3. c. viii. 6.) "I have given you want of bread in all your places, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have also with-holden the rain from you when there were yet three months unto the harvest—I have smitten you with blasting and mildew; your gardens and your vineyards the palmer worm devoured.—I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of *Egypt*; your young men have I slain with the sword—I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord," (Amos iv. 6—11.)

16. In consequence of their resolution not to return, they would not endure strong doctrine, or those that speak it. They "said to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things—Speak unto us smothe things—Cause the Holy One of *Israel* to cease from before us, (Isa. xxx. 10, 11.) But they hated him that rebuked in the gate, and they abhorred him that spake uprightly, (Amos v. 10.) Accordingly, thy people, (said God to *Ezekiel*) still are talking against thee, by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, (c. xxxiii. 30.) And *Amazia* the priest sent to *Jeroboam*, king of *Israel*, saying, *Amos* hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of *Israel*; the land is not able to bear all his words. Also *Amaziah* said unto *Amos*, go flee thee away into the land of *Judah*, and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more at *Bethel*, for it is the (king's

king's chapel, and it is the king's court," (c. vii. 10. 12, 13.) From the same spirit it was that they said of *Jeremiah*, "Come, and let us devise devices against him—Come and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words, (c. xviii. 18.) Hence it was that he was constrained to cry out, O Lord, I am in derision daily; every one mocketh me. Since I spake, the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily: for I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side: report, say they, and we will report it: all my familiars watched for my halting: saying, peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him, (c. xx. 7, 8, 10.) And elsewhere, Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth. I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me an usury: yet every one of them doth curle me," (c. xv. 19.)

17. "But if a man walking in the spirit of falsehood, do lie (said the prophet *Micah*) saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people, (c. ii. 11.) And God gave them pastors after their own hearts: such were those sons of *Eli*, sons of *Belial*, who knew not the Lord, (1 Sam. ii. 12.) rapacious, covetous, violent men, (ver. 14, 15, 16.) by reason of whom men abhorred the offering of the Lord, (ver. 17.) who not only made themselves vile, (c. iii. 13.) but also made the Lord's people to transgress, (c. ii. 24.) while they made themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of *Israel*, (v. 29.) Such were those of whom *Isaiah* says, the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine, (c. xxviii. 7.) Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink: and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant, (c. lvi. 12.) Therefore, saith he, the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath

closed your eyes: the prophets and the seers hath he covered; and the vision of all is become unto you, as the words of a book that is sealed, (c. xxix. 10, 11.) Such also were those of whom he said, His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Greedy dogs, which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand. They all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter," c. lvi. 10, 11.

Little better were those of whom the prophets that followed have left us so dreadful an account; "both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. And from the prophets of Jerusalem, is profaneness gone forth into all the land, Jer. xxiii. 11. 15. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the prophane, and I am profaned among them, Ezek. xxii. 26. If I be a father, where is mine honour; and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my Name," Mal. i. 6.

Yea some of them were fallen into the grossest sins. "The company of priests, said Hosea, commit lewdness: there is whoredom in Ephraim, Israel is despised, c. vi. 9, 10. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem (saith God by Jeremiah) a horrible thing; they commit adultery and walk in lies," c. xxiii. 14.

18. And those who were clear of this were deeply covetous. "Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, Mal. vi. 10. The priests of Zion preach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money. Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? Mic. iii. 11. Thus saith the Lord, The prophets bite with their teeth, and cry peace: and

and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him, c. iii. 5. Therefore the word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel, saying, Prophecy against the shepherds of Israel, and say, Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves: should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat and ye clothe you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye fought that which was lost, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered because there is no shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field. Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search and seek after them," c. xxxiv. 1-6.

19. To the same effect do the other prophets declare, "Ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble.—Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, Mal. ii. 8, 9. From the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace, Jer. vi. 13, 14. They prophesy lies in my name, c. xiv. 14. They say still unto them that despise me, the Lord hath said, ye shall have peace; and they say unto every man that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you, c. xxiii. 17. The prophets of Jerusalem strengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness, v. 14. They have seduced my people, and one built up a wall, and lo! others daubed it with untempered mortar, Ezek. xiii. 10. With lies they have made the hearts of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he shall not return from his wicked way, by

promising him life, v. 22. Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness, Jer. xxii. 10. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst of her, like a roaring lion, ravening the prey. They have devoured souls, Ezek. xxii. 25. Thus saith the Lord, feed the flock of the slaughter, whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty, and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pitied them not," Zach. xi. 4, 5.

II. 1. Such is the general account which the scriptures give of the Jews, the antient church of God. And since all these things were *written for our instruction*, who are now the visible church of the God of Israel, I shall in the next place appeal to all who profess this, to every one who calls himself a *Christian*, how far in each instance the parallel holds? and how much *we* are better than *they*?

And first, Were they *discontented*? Did they *repine* at the providence of God? Did they say, *Is the Lord among us or not?* when they were in imminent danger, or pressing want, and saw no way to escape? And which of us can say, *I am clear from this sin*: I have washed my hand and my heart in innocency? Have not we who *judge others*, *done the same things*? *murmured* and *repined* times without number? yea, and that when we were not in pressing want, nor distressed with imminent danger? Are we not in general, (our own writers being the judges) have we not ever been from the earliest ages, a *repining, murmuring, discontented people*, never long satisfied either with God or man? Surely in this we have great need to humble ourselves before God; for we are in nowise better than they.

But

But *Jeshurun* forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. And did not *England* too? Ask ye of the generations of old, enquire from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, whether there was ever a people called by his name, which had less of God in all their thoughts? Who in the whole tenor of their behaviour shewed so light an esteem for the Rock of our salvation?

Could there ever be stronger cause for God to cry out, *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear O Earth!* For hath he not nourished and brought us up as his children? And yet, how have we rebelled against him! If *Israel* of old did not know God; if his antient people did not consider; was this peculiar to them? Are not we also under the very same condemnation? Do we, as a people, know God? Do we consider him as God? Do we tremble at the presence of his power? Do we revere his excellent Majesty? Do we remember at all times, God is here? He is now reading my heart: he spieth out all my ways: there is not a word in my tongue but he knoweth it altogether: is this the character of us *English Christians*? The mark whereby we are known from the *Heathen*? Do we thus know God? Thus consider his power, his love, his all-seeing eye? Rather, are we not likewise a *sinful nation, who have forgotten him days without number!* A people laden with iniquity, continually forsaking the Lord, and provoking the Holy One of *Israel*.

2. There is indeed a wide difference, in this respect between the Jews and us; they happened (if I may so speak) to forget God, because other things came in their way: but we design to forget him; we do it of set purpose, because we do not like to remember him. From the accounts given by *Jeremiah*, we have reason to believe, that when that people was most deeply corrupted, yet the greatest men in the nation, the ministers of state, the nobles

and princes of *Judah*, talked of God sometimes, perhaps, as frequently as upon any other subject. But is it so among us? Rather, is it not a point of good breeding to put God far-away, out of their sight? Is he talked of at all among the great? The nobles or ministers of state in *England*? Among any persons of rank or figure in the world? Do they allow God any place in their conversation? From day to day, from year to year, do you discourse one hour of the wonders he doth for the children of men? If one at a gentleman or a nobleman's table was to begin a discourse, of the wisdom, greatness, or power of God, would it not occasion (at least) as much astonishment, as if he had begun to talk blasphemy? And if the unbred man persisted therein, would it not put all the company into confusion? And what do you sincerely believe the more favourable part would say of him when he was gone? But that—"He is a little touched in his head!" or, "Poor man! he has not seen the world."

You know, this is the naked truth. But how terrible is the thought to every serious mind! Into what a state is this *Christian* nation fallen! Nay the men of eminence, of fortune, of education! Would not a thinking foreigner, who should be present at such an interview, be apt to conclude, that the men of quality in *England* were atheists? That they did not believe there was any God at all; or, at best only an Epicurean God, who sat at ease upon the circle of the heavens, and did not concern himself about us worms of the earth? Nay, but he understands every thought now rising in your heart. And how long can you put him out of your sight? Only till this veil of flesh is rent in sunder. For your pomp will not then follow you. Will not your body be mingled with common dust? And your soul stand naked before God? O that you would now *acquaint yourself with God*, that you may then be clothed with glory and immortality!

3. Did God complain of the *Jews*, even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them? And how justly may he make the same complaint of us? For how exceeding small a proportion do we find of those in any place who call themselves Christians, that make a conscience of attending them? Does one third of the inhabitants in any one parish throughout this great city, constantly attend public prayer and the ministry of his word, as of conscience towards God? Does one tenth of those who acknowledge it is an institution of Christ, duly attend the Lord's Supper? Does a fiftieth part of the nominal members of the Church of England observe the *Fasts* of the Church, or so much as the forty days of Lent, and all Fridays in the year? Who of these then can cast the first stone at the Jews, for neglecting the ordinances of God?

Nay, how many thousands are found among us, who have never partook of the Supper of the Lord! How many thousands are there, that live and die in this unrepented disobedience? What multitudes, even in this Christian city, do not attend any public worship at all? No, nor spend a single hour from one year to another in privately pouring out their hearts before God? Whether God meeteth him that remembereth him in his ways or not, is no concern of theirs: so the man eats and drinks, and dies as a beast dieth,

“ Drops into the dark and disappears.”

It was not therefore of the children of Israel alone, that the messenger of God might say, *There is none* (comparatively) *that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth himself up to take hold of Thee.*

4. Ye have heard, that it was said to them of old times, *because of swearing the land mourneth.* But if this might be said of the land of Canaan, how much more of this land? In what city or town,

town, in what market or exchange, in what street or place of public resort, is not the holy *Name whereby we are called* taken in vain, day by day? From the noble to the peasant, who fails to call upon God, in this, if in no other way? Whither can you turn, where can you go, without hearing some praying to God for damnation, either on his neighbour or himself? Cursing those, without either fear or remorse, whom Christ hath bought to inherit a blessing!

Are you one of these stupid, senseless, shameless wretches, that call so earnestly for damnation on your own soul? What if God should take you at your word? Are you *able to dwell with everlasting burnings*? If you are, why should you be in haste, to be in the *lake of fire burning with brimstone*? God help you, or you will be there soon enough, and long enough; for that *fire is not quenched*! But the *smoke thereof ascendeth up, day and night, for ever and ever*.

And what is that important affair, concerning which you was but now appealing to God? Was you *calling God to record upon your soul*, touching your everlasting salvation? No; but touching the beauty of your horse, the swiftness of your dog, or the goodness of your drink! How is this? What notion have you of God? What do you take him to be?

Idcirco stolidam præbet tibi vellere barbam.
Jupiter——?

What stupidity, what insatiation is this! Thus without either pleasure, or profit, or praise, to set at nought him that hath *all power both in heaven and earth*! Wantonly to *provoke the eyes of his glory*!

Are you a man of letters, who are sunk so low? I will not send you to the inspired writers (so called: perhaps you disdain to receive instruction by them) but to the old, blind heathen. Could you only fix in your mind the idea he had of God, (though

(though it is not strictly just, unless we refer it to God made man) you would never thus affront him more,

Ἡ, καὶ κυανέσιν ἔτ' ὀφρύσι νῦν τε Κρηίων
 Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χᾶνται ἱπὶρ' ἑώσαντο Ἀνακτοῦ.
 Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον.

Shall not the very heathen then *rise up in judgment against this generation, and condemn it*? Yea, and not only the learned heathens of *Greece and Rome*, but the savages of *America*. For I never remember to have heard a wild *Indian* name the name of *Sootaleicatee*, (him that sitteth in heaven) without either laying his hand upon his breast, or casting his eyes down to the ground. And you are a *Christian*! O how do you cause the very name of *Christianity* to be blasphemed among the heathen!

5. But is it light swearing only, (inexcusable as that is) because of which our land mourneth? May it not also be said of us, *Though they say the Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely*? Yea, to such a degree, that there is hardly the like in any nation under heaven; that almost every corner of the land is filled with wilful, deliberate perjury.

I speak not now of the perjuries which every common swearer cannot but run into day by day. (And indeed common "swearing notoriously contributes to the growth of perjury. For oaths are little minded when common use has sullied them, and every minute's repetition has made them cheap and vulgar.") Nor of those which are continually committed and often detected in our open courts of justice. Only with regard to the latter I must remark, that they are a natural consequence, of that monstrous, shocking manner, wherein oaths are usually administered therein: without any decency or seriousness at all; much less with that awful solemnity, which a rational heathen would expect, in an immediate appeal to the great God of heaven.

I had

I had once designed to consider all the oaths which are customarily taken by any set of men among us. But I soon found this was a work too weighty for me: so almost in *infinitum* are oaths multiplied in *England*: I suppose to a degree which is not known in any other nation in *Europe*.

What I now propose is, to instance only in a few, (but those not of small importance) and to shew, how amazingly little regard is had, to what is solemnly promised or affirmed before God.

6. This is done, in part, to my hands by a late author. So far as he goes, I shall little more than transcribe his words. (Mr. *Disney's* first Essay, p. 30.)

“ When a Justice of the Peace is sworn into the commission, he makes oath——“ That he shall do equal right to the poor and to the rich, after his cunning, wit and power, and after the laws and customs of the realm and statutes thereof made, in all articles in the king's commission to him directed.—What those articles are, you will find in the first Assignavimus of the Commission: “ we have assigned you and every one of you, jointly and severally—to keep and cause to be kept, all ordinances and statutes, made for—the quiet, rule, and government of our people, in all and every the articles thereof, according to the force, form, and effect of the same, and to chastise and punish all persons, offending against any of them, according to the form of those statutes and ordinances.” So that he is solemnly sworn to the execution of all such statutes, as the legislative power of the nation has thought fit to throw upon his care. Such are all those (among others) made against *drunkenness, tippling, profane swearing, blasphemy; lewd and disorderly practices, and profanation of the Lord's day.*” And it is hard to imagine how a Justice of Peace can think himself more concerned, to suppress riots, or private quarrels, than he is to levy twelve pence on a *profane swearer*, five shillings on a *drunkard*, ten shillings on a public-house that suffers *tippling*,
or

or any other penalty which the law exacts of vice and immorality. The same oath binds him both to one and the other, laying an exqual obligation upon his conscience. How a magistrate, who neglects to punish excess, profaneness and impiety, can excuse himself from the guilt of perjury, I do not pretend to know. If he reasons fairly, he will find himself as much forsworn, as an evidence who being upon his oath, to declare *the whole truth*, nevertheless conceals *the most considerable part* of it. And his perjury is so much the more infamous, as the ill example and effects of it will be mischievous."

7. The same author (in the preface to his second essay) goes on;

"You gentlemen of the *grand juries*, take a solemn oath, That you will diligently enquire, and true presentment make, of all such articles, matters, and things as shall be given you in charge: as also, that you will (not only present no person for envy, hatred, or malice, but) not leave any unpresented, for fear, favour, or affection. Now, are not the laws against immorality and profaneness *given you in charge*, as well as those against riots, felony, and treason? Are not presentment and indictment one method expressly appointed by the statutes, for the punishment of *drunkenness* and *tipling*? Are not the houses of *bawdry* and *gaming*, punishable in the same courts, and consequently *presentable* by you? Is not the proclamation for the punishing of vice, profaneness, and immorality, always read before you as soon as you are sworn? And does not the judge of assize, or chairman of the bench, in the charge given immediately after the reading it, either recite to you the particular laws against such offences, or refer you for them to that proclamation? It is plain from all this, that you are bound upon your oaths, to *present all vice and immorality*, as well as other crimes, that fall within your knowledge, because they are expressly *given you in charge*. And this you are to do, not only

only when evidence is offered before you by the information of others, but with regard to all such offences as you, or any of you are able of *your own personal knowledge* to present: all which you have sworn to do impartially, without fear, favour, or affection."

I leave it now with all reasonable men to consider, how few *grand juries* perform this? And consequently, what multitudes of them, throughout the nation, fall under the guilt of wilful perjury!

8. The author proceeds, p. 8. "I shall next address myself to you that are constables. And to you I must needs say, That if you know your duty, it is no thanks to us that are justices. For the oath we usually give you is so short, and in such general terms, that it leaves with you no manner of instruction in the particulars of the office to which you are sworn. But that which ought to be given you, recites part of your duty in the following words:

"You shall do your best endeavour, that rogues, vagabonds, and night-walkers, be apprehended; and that the statutes made for their punishment, be duly put in execution: you shall have a watchful eye to such as shall keep any house or place where any unlawful game is used: as also to such as shall frequent such places, or shall use any unlawful games, there or elsewhere. You shall present all and every the offences contrary to the statutes made to restrain tipling in inns, alehouses, and other victualling houses, and for repressing of drunkenness. You shall once in the year, during your office, present all *popish recusants*. You shall well and duly execute all precepts and warrants to you directed. And you shall well and duly, according to your knowledge, power, and ability, do and execute all other things belonging to the office of a constable, so long as you shall continue therein."

Upon this, "I would observe first, That *actors of plays* are expressed by name within the statute, to be taken up for vagabonds, and punished accordingly;

cordingly: and that though a statute of queen Elizabeth's excepts such companies as have a license under the hand and seal of a nobleman, yet a later statute in the reign of king James I. has taken away that protection from them; by declaring, That *from henceforth no authority to be given by any peer of the realm, shall be available to free or discharge them from the pains and punishments of that former statute.* Every constable therefore in those parishes, where any of these *strolling players* come, is bound by his oath, to seize upon, correct, and send them packing without delay."

"The next part of your oath obliges you to keep a watchful eye, on such houses as keep, and such persons as use unlawful gaming. The statute directs you weekly, or at least monthly, to search within your liberties, all houses or places suspected of this offence, and upon discovering, to bring them to punishment. Upon this article I would observe, 1. That the law makes some allowance, for artificers, husbandmen, apprentices, labourers and servants, to *play in Christmas*, but at no other time of the year; and 2. That *all sports and pastimes* whatsoever are made unlawful upon the Lord's day, by a statute of king Charles II. You are therefore bound upon oath, to bring to punishment such as are guilty of profaning that day by any sports or pastimes whatsoever."

The following parts of your oath are, 1. That you shall present all and every the offences of tippling and drunkenness that come to your knowledge; 2. That you shall once in the year present all *popish recusants*. Nay, and by the statutes on which your oath is grounded, you are obliged once a year to *present in session*, all those within your parishes, who (not being Dissenters) come not once in a month, at least, to Church. And 3. That you shall well and duly execute all precepts and warrants to you directed. I believe no constable will pretend to be ignorant of this. How is it then, that when we send out warrants, to levy on

offenders for swearing, drunkenness, and the like, those warrants are so ill obeyed? Are you not sworn to execute these as well as any other, and that duly too, according to the tenor of your precept? Your precept tells you, you shall demand such a sum, and if the offender will not pay, you shall *levy it by distress of his goods*: and if no distress can be taken, you are then only to set him in the stocks; otherwise you have no authority so to do: nor is the setting him in the stocks, when you might have distrained, any execution of your precept."

"The last part of your oath is in general terms, That you shall well and duly, according to your knowledge, power, and ability, do and execute all other things belonging to the office of a constable. I shall instance in some things which certainly belong to your office, because you, and none else, can do them. 1. A constable may, without a warrant, apprehend any persons, and carry them before a Justice, who are driving carts, horses, or cattle on the Lord's day: 2. He may do the same, without a warrant, to such as he may find at sports or pastimes on that day. 3. To such as he shall find tippling in public houses: 4. Shop-keepers selling or exposing goods to sale on the Lord's day; and lastly, to such as he shall find drunk or blaspheming, or profanely swearing or cursing."

Thus I have shewn you, in part, *what belongs to your office*: it is well, if according to the tenor of your oath, you *duly, to the best of your knowledge and ability, do and execute all these things*. But remember, that, if you do not, if you neglect any of them, you are *forsworn*.

Now let all men judge, how many constables in England are clear of wilful perjury!

9. "I will now (he goes on) address myself to church-wardens. Your oath is, "That you shall well and truly execute the office of a church-warden, for the ensuing year; and to the best of your skill and knowledge, present such persons and things,

things, as are presentable, by the ecclesiastical laws of this realm." I shall set down only a few of these.

"The statute of king James I. obliges you to present once a year, all monthly Absenters from Church."

"The 90th Canon enjoins you, first to admonish and then, if they reform not, to present all your parishioners who do not duly resort to Church on Sundays, and there continue the *whole time of divine service*. On this Article observe, 1. That a person's being absent from Church, is ground sufficient for you to proceed. 2. That you are not only to present, those who do not come to Church, but also those that behave irreverently or indecently there, either walking about or talking; all who do not *abide there orderly and soberly*, the whole time of Service and Sermon, and all that loiter away any part of that time in the church-yard or in the fields."

"The 112th Canon enjoins you, within 40 days after Easter, to exhibit to the Bishop or his Chancellor, the names of all above the age of sixteen, within your parish that did not receive the Communion."

"Other statutes oblige you to present drunkenness, tippling, and public houses suffering persons to tipple in them."

"And the 109th Canon binds you to present all manner of Vice, Profaneness and Debauchery, requiring you faithfully to present all and every the offenders in Adultery, Whoredom, Drunkenness, profane Swearing, or any other Uncleaness and wickedness of life." It is therefore a part of that office to which you are solemnly sworn, to prevent not only all Drunkenness and Tippling, but profane Swearing, Lewdness, and whatsoever else is contrary to Christian Piety. So that if you know any of your parishioners, be his quality or circumstances what they will, that is guilty of any of these, you are obliged to present him at the next

Visitation, or you are yourselves guilty of Perjury. And the 26th Canon expresses such an abhorrence of a church-warden's neglect in this matter, that it forbids the Minister, in anywise, to admit you to the holy communion, *who (as the words of the Canon are) having taken your oaths to present all such offences in your several parishes, shall notwithstanding your said oaths, either in neglecting or refusing to present, wittingly and willingly, desperately and irreli- giously incur, the horrid guilt of perjury."*

And who is clear? I appeal to ever Minister of a parish, from one end of *England* to the other, How many church-wardens have you known, in twenty, thirty, forty years, who did not thus *desperately and irreli- giously incur, the horrid guilt of perjury?*

10. I proceed to perjuries of another kind. The Oath taken by all *Captains of ships*, every time they return from a trading voyage, runs in these terms:

"I do swear, that the entry above written, now tendered and subscribed by me, is a just report of the name of my ship, its burthen, built, property, number and country of mariners, the present Master and voyage: and that it doth farther contain a true account of my lading, with the particular marks, numbers, quantity, quality and consignment, of all the goods and merchandizes in my said ship, to the best of my knowledge; and that I have not broke bulk, or delivered any goods out of my said ship, since her loading in. So help me God."

These words are so clear, express, and unambiguous, that they require no explanation. But who takes this plain oath without being knowingly and deliberately forsworn? Does one captain in fifty? Does one in five hundred? May we not go farther yet? Are there five captains of vessels now in *London*, who have not at one time or another, by this very oath, which they knew to be false when they took it, incurred the guilt of *wilful perjury?*

11. The

11. The oath which all officers of his Majesty's customs, take at their admission into their office, runs thus:

" I do swear to be true and faithful in the execution, to the best of my knowledge and power, of the trust committed to my charge and inspection, in the service of his Majesty's Customs: and that I will not take or receive, any reward or gratuity, directly or indirectly, other than my salary, or what is or shall be allowed me from the Crown, or the regular fees established by law, for any service done or to be done in the execution of my employment in the Customs, on any account whatsoever. So help me God."

On this it may be observed, 1. That there are regular fees, established by law, for some of these Officers; 2. That the rest do hereby engage, not to take or receive any reward or gratuity, directly or indirectly, other than their salary or allowance from the Crown, on any account whatsoever.

How do the former keep this solemn engagement? They whose fees are established by law? Do they take those established fees and no more? Do they not receive any farther gratuity? Not on any account whatsoever? If they do they are undeniably guilty of *wilful perjury*.

And do the latter take no fees at all? Do they receive no reward or gratuity, for any service done, or to be done, in the execution of their employment? Do they not take any money, directly or indirectly, on any account whatsoever? Every time they do receive either more or less, they also are flatly forsworn.

Yet who scruples either the one or the other? Either taking a *larger fee* than the law appoints? Or the taking *any fee*, large or small, which is offered, even where the law appoints none at all?

What innumerable Perjuries then are here committed, over and over, day by day! And without any remorse; without any shame! Without any fear either of God or Man!

12. I will produce but one instance more: The oath of one who votes for a Member of Parliament is this:

" I do swear, I have not received or had, by myself, or of any person whatsoever in trust for me, or for my use and benefit, directly or indirectly, any sum or sums of money, office, place or employment, gift or reward, or any promise or security for any money, office, employment or gift, in order to give my Vote at this Election, and that I have not before been polled at this Election. So help me God."

We may observe here, 1. That this Oath is taken, once in seven years (if not oftner) by all the Freeholders, in every county throughout *England* and *Wales*, as well as all the Freemen in every City and Borough-Town; and 2. That hereby every Voter swears, in words liable to no evasion. That he has not received, directly or indirectly, any gift or reward, or promise of any.

But (to pass over those godless and shameless wretches, who frequently vote twice at one Election) How few are there, who can take this Oath with a Conscience void of offence? Who have not received, directly or indirectly any gift or promise of any? No! have not you? If you have received nothing else, have not you received meat or drink? and did you pay for the meat or drink you received? If not, that was a gift; and consequently, you are as really perjured, as the man that has received a hundred pounds.

What a melancholy prospect is then before us! Here are almost all the common people of any substance throughout the land, both in the city and country, calling God to record, to *known, wilful falsehoods!*

13. I shall conclude this head in the weighty words of the Author before cited.

" Most of these, I am afraid, look upon their Oaths as *things of course*, and little to be regarded. But can there be any thing in the world more sacred.

sacred than an Oath? Is it not a solemn Appeal to God for your sincerity? And is not that very appeal an acknowledgement, that he will surely, punish falsehood? Nay farther, is it not a calling down the vengeance of God upon yourselves if you are false? Do you not, by laying your hand upon the Gospel, declare, That *you hope for no Salvation by Christ*, if you perform not what you then promise, or, if what you then affirm, is not true? And do not the words, *So help me God*, sufficiently prove, that the intention of your oath is so? And that if you swear false, you are to expect no mercy from God, either in this world or the next? And do you not personally and expressly give your consent to this heavy curse, by *kissing the Book*? How then dare any of you to venture to play with so awful an engagement? Is it that you think the oath of a *Grand Jury-man*, or *Parish-Officer*, (of a *Captain*, an *Officer of the Customs*, or a *Voter* in Elections) “is not as sacred and binding as that of an *Evidence at the Bar*? What is it can make the difference? Both of them are equally Appeals to God, and Imprecations of his Vengeance upon *wilful Perjury*.”

14. If there be then a God that is not mocked, what a weight of sin lies on this nation? And sin of no common dye; for Perjury has always been accounted one of the deepest stain. And how will any one attempt to excuse this? By adding Blasphemy thereto? So indeed some have done; laying, like those of old, *Tush, thou God carest not for it. The Lord seeth (i. e. regardeth) us not. The Lord hath forsaken the earth.* He hath left *second causes* to take their course, and man in the hand of *his own counsel*.

How many are they who now speak thus; according to whose minute Philosophy, the particular Providence of God is utterly exploded, *the hair of our heads are no longer numbered*: and not only a sparrow, but a city, an empire may *fall to the ground, without the will or care of our heavenly Father*.

Father. You allow then only a general Providence. I do not understand the term. Be so kind as to let me know, what you mean by a "General Providence, contradistinguished from a particular one?" I doubt you are at a loss for an answer; unless you mean some huge, unweildy thing, (I suppose resembling the *Primum Mobile* in the *Ptolemaick* System) which continually whirls the whole Universe round, without affecting one thing more than another. I doubt this Hypothesis will demand more proof, than you are at present able to produce; beside that it is attended with a thousand difficulties, such as you cannot readily solve. It may be therefore your wisest way for once to think with the vulgar, to acquiesce in the plain, scriptural account. This informs us, that although God dwelleth in heaven, yet he still ruleth over all: That his Providence extends to every individual in the whole system of Beings which he hath made: that all natural Causes of every kind, depend wholly upon his will; and he increases, lessens, suspends or destroys their efficacy, according to his own good pleasure: that he uses preternatural Causes at his will, the ministry of good or of evil Angels: and that he hath never yet precluded himself from exerting his own immediate power, from speaking life or death into any of his creatures: from looking a world into being, or into nothing.

Thinkest thou then, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of this great God? O no longer treasure up unto thyself wrath, against the day of wrath! Thou canst not recal what is past; but now keep thyself pure, even were it at the price of all that thou hast; and acknowledge the goodness of God, in that he did not long since cut thee off, and send thee to thy own place.

15. The Jews of old were charged by God, with profaning his Sabbaths also. And do we Christians come behind them herein? (I speak of those who acknowledge the obligation.) Do we call the sabbath

Sabbath a Delight, holy of the Lord, honourable? Not doing our own ways, not finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words? Do our men-servants and maid-servants rest thereon? And the stranger that is within our gates? Is no business, but what is really necessary, done within our house? You know in your own conscience, and God knoweth, that the very reverse of this is true.

But setting aside these things which are done as it were by stealth, whether by mean or honourable men; how many are they, in every city, as well as in this, who profane the Sabbath with a high hand? How many in this, that openly defy both God and the King, that break the laws both divine and human, by working at their trade, delivering their goods, receiving their pay, or following their ordinary business, in one branch or another, and *wiping their mouth and saying, "I do no evil?"* How many buy and sell on the Day of the Lord, even in the open streets of this city? How many open or (with some modesty) half open their shops? And when they have not the pretence of perishable goods; without any pretence at all, money is their god, and gain their godliness.——But what are all these droves in the skirts of the town, that well nigh cover the face of the earth? Till they drop one after another into the numerous receptacles prepared for them in every corner. What are these to gain by profaning the Day of the Lord? Nothing at all. They *drink in iniquity like water.* Nay, many of them pay for their sin; perhaps great part of what should sustain their family the ensuing week, I know not what is *finding our own pleasure, or doing our own ways*, if this is not. What then shall we plead in your excuse? That "Many others do it as well as you?" Nay, number is so far from extenuating your fault, that it aggravates it above measure. For this is open war against God. A whole army of you join together, and with one consent, in the face of the Sun, *run upon the thick bosses of his buckler.*

16. It is once mentioned in the Prophets, *In thee (Jerusalem) they have set light by father and mother.* But frequent mention is made of their setting light by their civil parents, of their murmurings and rebellings against their governors. Yet surely our boasting against them is excluded, even in this respect. For do not all our histories witness such a series of mutinies, seditions, factions and rebellions, as are scarce to be paralleled in any other kingdom, since the world began? And has not the wild, turbulent, ungovernable spirit of our countrymen, been continually acknowledged and lamented, (as abundance of their writings testify to this day) by the cool, rational part of the nation? Terrible effects whereof have been seen and felt, more or less, in every generation.

But did this spirit exist only in times past? Blessed be God, it is now restrained it does not break out; * but the traces thereof are still easy to be found. For whence springs this continual *speaking evil of dignities*? Of all who are at the helm of public affairs? Whence this *speaking evil of the ruler of our people*, so common among all orders of men? I do not include those whose province it is to inspect all the public administrations. But is not almost every private Gentleman in the land, every Clergyman, every Tradesman; yea every Man or Woman that has a Tongue, a Politician, a Settler of the State? Is not every Carman and Porter abundantly more knowing than the King, Lords and Commons together? Able to tell you all their foibles, to point out their faults and mistakes, and how they ought to proceed, if they will save the nation? Now all this has a natural, undeniable tendency to mutiny and rebellion. O what need have we above any nation on earth, of his continual care and protection, who alone is able to *rule the raging of the sea, and still the madness of the people!*

* N. B. This was wrote a year ago.

17. But to proceed. Were there drunkards in Ephraim, mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink? And are there not in England? Are they not the growth of every county, city and town therein? These do not indeed, or not often rise up early, that they may follow strong drink; and so continue till night, till wine inflame them. They have found a readier way! namely, to begin at night, and continue following their wine or strong drink till the morning. And what numbers are there of these throughout the land? Lost to Reason and Humanity, as well as to Religion: so that no wonder they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.

Nor indeed have our drunkards need to continue from morning to night, until wine inflame them: seeing they have found a far more compendious method of casting aside all sense and reason, and disencumbering themselves from all remains, either of Conscience or Understanding. So that whatever work of darkness is speedily to be done, and that without any danger of being interrupted, either by Fear, Compassion or Remorse, they may be in a few moments, by one draught as effectually qualified for it, as if they could swallow a legion of devils. Or, (if that be all their concern) they may, at a moderate expence, destroy their own body as well as soul, and plunge through this liquid fire, into that prepared for the devil and his angels.

Friend! Stop! you have the form of a man still. And perhaps some remains of understanding. O may the merciful God lay hold of that! Unto him all things are possible. Think a little for once. What is it you are doing? Why should you destroy yourself? I could not use the worst enemy I have in the world, as you use yourself. Why should you murder yourself inch by inch? Why should you burn yourself alive? O spare your own body at least, if you have no pity for your soul! But have you a soul then? Do you really believe it? What, a soul that must live for ever!

ever! O spare thy soul! Do not destroy thy own soul with an everlasting destruction! It was made for God. Do not give it into the hands of that old murderer of men! Thou canst not stupify it long. When it leaves the body, it will awake and sleep no more. Yet a little while, and it launches out into the great deep, to live and think, and feel for ever. And what will cheer thy spirit there, if thou hast not *a drop of water to cool thy tongue*? But the dye is not yet cast. Now cry to God, and *iniquity shall not be thy ruin.*

18. Of old time there were also those that *were at ease in Ziom, that lay upon beds of ivory, and stretched themselves upon their couches, that eat the lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the stall.* But how inelegant where these antient *Epicures*! *Lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the stall!* Were these the best dainties they could procure? How have we improved, since Jeroboam's time? Who can number the varieties of our tables; or the arts we have "To enlarge the pleasure of tasting?" And what are their couches, or beds of ivory, to the furniture of our apartments? Or their *chains and bracelets, and mantles and changeable suits of apparel,* to the ornaments of our persons? What comparison is there between their diversions and ours? Look at *Solomon* in all his glory; and yet may we not question, whether he was not an utter stranger to the *pleasures of the Chase*? And notwithstanding his 40000 horses, did he ever see, a Race in his life? He made gardens and orchards, and pools of water; he planted vineyards and built houses. But had he one theatre among them all? No. This is the glory of later times. Or had he any conception of a Ball, an Assembly, a Masquerade or a Ridotto? And who imagines that all his instruments of music put together, were any more to be compared to ours, than his or his father's rumbling Hebrew verses,

"To the soft Sing Song of Italian lays."

In

In all these points our pre-eminence over the Jews, is much every way.

Yea, and over our own ancestors as well as theirs. But is this our glory or our shame? Were Edward the III^d, or Henry the Vth to come among us now, what would they think of the change in their people? Would they applaud the elegant variety at the Old Baron's table? or the costly delicacy of his furniture and apparel? Would they listen to these instruments of music? Or find pleasure in those diversions? Would they rejoice to see the Nobles and Gentry of the land, lying at ease, stretching themselves on beds of down? Too delicate to use their own limbs, even in the streets of the city: to bear the touch of the people, the blowing of the wind, or the shining of the sun! O how would their hearts burn within them! What indignation, sorrow, shame must they feel, to see the ancient hardiness lost, the British temperance, patience and scorn of superfluities, the rough, indefatigable industry, exchanged for softness, idleness and fulness of bread! Well for them, that they were gathered unto their fathers, before this exchange was made!

19. To prove at large, That the luxury and sensuality, the sloth and indolence, the softness and idleness, the effeminacy and false delicacy of our nation are without a parallel, would but be lost labour. I fear, we may say, the *lewdness* too; for if the Jews, as the Prophet speaks, *assembled themselves by troops in the harlots houses*, so do the English, and much more abundantly. Indeed, where is male chastity to be found? Among the Nobility? Among the Gentry? Among the Tradesmen? or among the common people of England? How few lay any claim to it at all? How few desire so much as the reputation of it? Would you yourself account it an honour or a reproach, to be ranked among those of whom it is said, *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins*? And how numerous are they now, even

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among

among such as are accounted men of honour and probity, *who are as fed horses, every one neighing after his neighbour's wife?*

But as if this were not enough, is not the sin of Sodom too, more common among us than ever it was in Jerusalem? Are not our streets beset with those monsters of uncleanness, who *burn in their lust one toward another, whom God hath given up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient?* O Lord, thy compassions fail not: therefore we are not consumed.

20. Neither do we yield to them in *injustice* any more than *uncleanness*. How frequent are open robberies among us? Is not the act of violence even in our streets? And what laws are sufficient to prevent it? Does not *theft* of various kinds abound in all parts of the land, even though death be the punishment of it? And are there not among us, who *take usury and increase, who greedily gain of their neighbour by extortion?* Yea, whole trades which subsist by such extortion, as was not named either among the Jews or Heathens? *Is there not yet the scant measure, the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?* Beside the thousand nameless ways of over-reaching and defrauding, the craft and mystery of every trade and profession. It were an endless task to descend to particulars, to point out in every circumstance, how not only sharpers and gamesters, (those public nuisances, those scandals to the English nation) but high and low, rich and poor, men of character and men of note, in every station of public or private life, have corrupted themselves, and generally applauded themselves and count it policy and wisdom so to do: so that if gain be at hand, they care not, though *justice stand afar off*: so that *he which departeth from evil, which cometh not into their Secret, still maketh himself a prey*; and *the wicked still devoureth the man that is more righteous than he*.

And what redress? Suppose a great man to oppress the needy? Suppose the rich grinds the face
of

of the poor : what remedy against such oppression can he find in this Christian country ? If the one is rich and the other poor, doth not justice stand afar off ? And is not the poor under the utmost improbability, (if not impossibility) of obtaining it ? Perhaps the hazard is greater among us, than either among Jews, Turks or Heathens.

For Example. Suppose a great man, with or without form of law, does wrong to his poor neighbour. What will he do ? Sue his Lordship at common law ? Have the cause tried at the next Sessions or Assizes ? Alas ! Your own neighbours those who know the whole case, will tell you, " You are out of your senses." " But twelve good men and true will do me justice." Very well : but where will you find them : men unbiassed, incapable of corruption, superior both to fear and favour, to every view whether of gain or loss ? But this is not all ; they must not only be good and true, but wise and understanding men. Else how easy is it for a skilful pleader to throw a mist before their eyes ? Even supposing too the Judge to be quite impartial, and proof against all corruption. And should all these circumstances concur, (of which I fear there are not many precedents) supposing a verdict is given in your favour, still you have gained nothing. The suit is removed into a higher Court, and you have all your work to begin again. Here you have to struggle with all the same difficulties as before, and perhaps many new ones too. However, if you have money enough, you may succeed : but if that fails, your cause is gone. Without money, you can have no more law ; poverty alone utterly shuts out justice.

But, " cannot an honest Attorney procure me justice ? An honest Attorney ! Where will you find one ? Of those who are called *exceeding honest* Attornies, who is there that makes any scruple,

1. To promote and encourage needless suits, if not unjust ones too ?

2. To defend a bad Cause, knowing it so to be :

D 2.

By

By making a Demur, and then withdrawing it :
 By pleading some false plea, to the Plaintiff's Declaration :

By putting an evasive Answer to his Bill :

By protracting the Suit, if possible, till the Plaintiff is ruined :

3. To carry a Cause not amounting to ten shillings into *Westminster-Hall*, by laying it in his Declaration as above forty :

4. To delay his own Client's Suit knowingly and wilfully, in order to gain thereby :

5. To draw himself the Pleadings or Conveyances of his Client, instead of giving them to be drawn by able Counsel.

6. To charge his Client with the Fees which should have been given to such Counsel, although they were not given :

7. To charge for drawing fair copies, where none were drawn :

8. To charge Fees for expedition given to Clerks, when not one farthing has been given them :

9. To send his Clerk a journey (longer or shorter) to do business with or for different persons; and to charge the horse-hire and expence of that journey to every person severally :

10. To send his Clerk to *Westminster*, on the business of ten (it may be) or twenty persons, and to charge each of those twenty for his attendance, as if he had been sent on account of one only :

11. To charge his own attendance in like manner: And

12. To fill up his Bill with Attendances, Fees, and Term-fees, though his Client is no whit forwarder in his cause.

This is he that is called an *honest Attorney*! How much *honest*er is a pick-pocket?

But there is a Magistrate whose peculiar office it is, to redress the injured and oppressed. Go then and make trial of this remedy; go, and tell your case to the Lord Chancellor. Hold; you must go on regularly: you must tell him your case, in form of

of law, or not at all. You must therefore file a Bill in Chancery, and retain a Lawyer belonging to that Court. "But you have already spent all you have; you have no money." Then I fear you will have no justice. You stumble at the threshold. If you have either lost or spent all, your Cause is naught: it will not even come to a hearing. So, if the oppressor has secured all that you had, he is as safe as if you was under the earth.

21. Now what an amazing thing is this! The very greatness of the villainy makes it beyond redress!—But suppose he that is oppressed, has some substance left, and can go through all the Courts of Justice, what parallel can we find among Jews, Turks, or Heathens, for either the *delays* or the *expences* attending it? With regard to the former, how monstrous is it, that in a suit relating to that inheritance, which is to furnish you and your family with food and raiment, you must wait month after month, perhaps year after year, before it is determined, whether it be yours or not? And what are you to *eat*, or to *wear* in the mean time? Of that the Court takes no cognizance! Is not this very *delay*, (suppose there were no other grievance attending the English course of law) wrong beyond all expression? Contrary to all Sense, Reason, Justice and Equity? A capital Cause is tried in one day, and finally decided at once. And, is the life less than meat? Or the body of less concern than raiment? What a shameful mockery of Justice then, is this putting off Pecuniary Causes from term to term, yea, from year to year?

With regard to the latter. A man has wronged me of a hundred pounds. I appeal to a Judge for the recovery of it. How astonishing is it, that this Judge himself cannot give me what is my right, and what evidently appears so to be, unless I first give, perhaps one half of the sum; to men I never saw before in my life!

22. I have hitherto supposed, that all Causes when they are decided, are decided according to

justice and equity. But is it so? Ye Learned in the Law, is no unjust sentence given in your Courts? Have not the same Causes been decided, quite opposite ways? One way, this Term, just the contrary, the next? Perhaps one way in the morning (this I remember an instance of, and another way in the afternoon: How is this? Is there no *Justice* left on earth? No regard for right or wrong? Or have Causes been puzzled so long, that you know not now what is either wrong or right? What is agreeable to law, or contrary to it? I have heard some of you frankly declare, that it is in many cases next to impossible to know, what is law, and what is not. So are your *folio's* of Law multiplied upon you that no human brain is able to contain them: no; nor any consistent Scheme, or Abstract of them all.

But is it really owing to ignorance of the Law, (this is the most favourable supposition) that so few of you scruple *taking Fees* on either side, of almost any Cause that can be conceived? And that you generally plead in the manner you do on any side of any Cause? Rambling to and fro, in a way so abhorrent from common sense, and so utterly foreign to the question? I have been amazed at hearing the pleadings of some eminent Counsel: and when it has fallen out that the Pleader on the other side understood only the common Rules of Logic, he has made those eminent men appear, either such egregious knaves, if they could help it, or such egregious blockheads, if they could not, that one would have believed, they would shew their face there no more.—Mean time, if there be a God that judgeth righteously, what horrid insults upon him are these! *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this!*

eg. There is one instance more of (I know not what to term it) injustice, oppression, sacrilege, which hath long cried aloud in the ears of God. For among men, who doth hear? I mean the
managemen

management of many of those who are intrusted with our Public Charities. By the pious munificence of our forefathers, we have abundance of these, of various kinds. But is it not glaringly true, (to touch only on a few generals) that the managers of many of them, either 1. Do not apply the benefaction to that use for which it was designed by the benefactor, or 2. Do not apply it with such care and frugality, as in such a case are indispensably required: Or 3. Do not apply the whole of the benefaction to any charitable use at all; but secrete part thereof, from time to time, for the use of themselves and their families. Or, lastly, by plain, bare-faced oppression, exclude those from having any part in such benefaction, who dare (though with all possible tenderness and respect) set before them the things that they have done;

“ Yet *Brutus* is an honourable man:

“ So are they all: all honourable men!”

And some of them; had an esteem for religion; accounted patterns both of honesty and piety! But *God seeth not as man seeth. He shall repay them to their face.* Perhaps, even in the present world. For that scripture is often still fulfilled, *This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, (such he is and no better, in the eyes of God, no whit honest than a highwayman) and it shall remain in the midst of the house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.*

24. And is not *Truth*, as well as *Justice*, fallen in our streets? For who speaketh the truth from his heart? Who is there, that makes a conscience of speaking the thing as it is, whenever he speaks at all? Who scruples the telling of officious lies? The varying from *Truth*, in order to do good? How strange does that saying of the antient Father, found in modern ears, “ I would not tell a lie, no not to save the souls of the whole world.” Yet is this

this strictly agreeable to the word of God ; to that of St. Paul in particular, if any say, *Let us do evil that good may come, their damnation is just.*

But how many of us do this evil, without ever considering, whether good will come or no? Speaking what we do not mean, merely out of custom, because it is fashionable so to do? What an immense quantity of falsehood does this ungodly fashion occasion day by day? For hath it not overrun every part of the nation? How is all our language swoln with compliment? So that a well-bred person is not expected to speak as he thinks: we do not look for it at his hands; nay, who would thank him for it? How few would suffer it? It was said of old, even by a Warrior and a King, *He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my fight*: but are we not of another mind? Do not we rather say, *He that telleth not lies, shall not tarry in my fight*? Indeed the trial seldom comes; for both speakers and hearers are agreed, that Form and Ceremony, Flattery and Compliment should take place, and Truth be banished from all that know the world.

And if the rich and great have so small regard to truth, as to *lie* even for *lying-fake*, what wonder can it be that men of lower rank will do the same thing for gain? What wonder that it should obtain, as by common consent in all kinds of *buying and selling*? Is it not an adjudged case, That it is no harm to tell lies in the way of Trade? To say, that is the honest price which is not the lowest; or that you will not take what you do take immediately? Inso-much that it is a proverb even among the Turks, when asked to abate of their price, "What! do you take me to be a Christian?" So that never was that caution more seasonable than it is at this day, *Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and they will deceive every one his neighbour.*

25. And as for those few who abstain from outward sins, is their heart right with God? May he not say to us also (as of the Jews) *This people is uncircumcised*

*circumcised in heart? Are not you? Do you then love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your strength? Is he your God and your all? The desire of your eyes? The joy of your very heart? Rather, do you not set up your idols in your heart? Is not your belly your god? Or your diversion? Or your fair reputation? Or your friend? Or wife? Or child? That is plainly, do not you delight in some of these earthly goods, more than in the God of heaven? Nay; perhaps you are one of those grovelling souls that pant after the dust of the earth! Indeed who does not? Who does not get as much as he can? Who of those that are not accounted covetous, yet does not gather all the money he can fairly, and perhaps much more? For are they those only whom the world rank among misers, that use every art to increase their fortune? Toiling early and late, spending all their strength in loading themselves with thick clay? How long? Until the very hour when God calleth them; when he saith unto each of them, *Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee! And whose shall those things be which thou hast prepared?**

26. And yet doth not our Pride, even the pride of those whose soul cleaves to the dust, testify against us? Are they not wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit? Have not writers of our own remarked, that there is not upon earth a more self-conceited nation than the English; more opinionated both of their own national and personal wisdom, and courage and strength? And indeed, if we may judge by the inhabitants of *London*, this is evident to a demonstration: for, Are not the very meanest of them able to instruct both the King and all his Counsellors? What *Cobler* in *London* is not wiser than the Principal Secretary of State? What *Coffee-house* Disputant is not an abler divine than his Grace of *Canterbury*? And how deep a contempt of others is joined with this high opinion of ourselves? I know not whether the people of all other nations are greater Masters.

Masters of Dissimulation; but there does not appear in any nation whatever, such a proneness to despise their neighbour: to despise not only foreigners only (near two thousand years ago they remarked, *Britannos Hospitibus feres*) but their own countrymen; and that very often for such surprising reasons, as nothing but undeniable fact could make credible. How often does the gentleman in his coach despise those *dirty fellows that go on foot*? And these, on the other hand, despise full as much those *lazy fellows that loll in their coaches*? No wonder then that those who have the Form of Godliness should despise them that have not: that the saint of the world so frequently says to the gross sinner, in effect, if not in terms, *Stand by thyself: come not near unto me; for I am holier than thou!*

27. Yet what kind of holiness is this? May not God justly declare of us also, *This people draw near to me with their mouth, but they have removed their hearts far from me. They do but flatter me with their mouth, and dissemble with me in their tongue.* Is it not so with you? When you speak to God, do your lips and your heart go together? Do you not often utter words by which you mean just nothing? Do not you say and unsay? Or, say one thing to God, and another to man? For instance, you say to God, *Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep me this day without sin.* But you say to man, *This cannot be done; it is all folly and madness to expect it.* You ask of God, *That you may perfectly love, and worthily magnify his holy Name:* but you tell man, *There is no perfect Love upon earth; it is only a Madman's Dream.* You pray God, *to cleanse the thoughts of your heart, by the inspiration of his holy Spirit.* But you assure your neighbour, *there is no such thing as Inspiration now, and that none pretend to it but Enthusiasts.* What gross hypocrisy is this! Surely you think, *there is no knowledge in the Most High. O be not deceived, God is not mocked. But whatsoever ye sow, that also shall ye reap!*

28. Such

28. Such at present is the Religion of this Christian nation! So do we honour him by whose Name we are called. And yet was there ever a nation more careless and secure? More unapprehensive of the wrath of God! How can a man more effectually expose himself to the ridicule of those who are esteemed men of understanding, than by shewing any concern, as if the judgments of God were hanging over our heads? * Surely then *a deceived heart hath turned us aside, that we cannot say, Is there not a lie in my right-hand?* Surely this our confidence is not of God: it is rather a judicial insatiation; a stupid insensibility; a deep sleep, the Forerunner of heavy vengeance.

“ Ruin behind it stalks, an empty Desolation.”

Surely never was any people more fitted for destruction! *Impudent children are they, and stiff hearted. Are they ashamed when they have committed abomination?* When they have openly profaned the day of the Lord? When they have committed lewdness? Or when they have uttered such curses and blasphemies, as are not heard of among the heathens? Nay, *They are not at all ashamed, neither can they blush.* And though God send unto them all his Servants, rising up early and sending them, yet *will they not hear; they harden their neck!* *They do worse than their fathers.*

What then can God do more for his Vineyard which he hath not done? He hath long tried us with mercies, *giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling us with the flour of wheat.* We have had plenty of all things; and while War roared around, *Peace has been in all our borders.* But still this revolting and rebellious people say not, *Let us now fear the Lord our God.* Nay, they gave him no thanks for all his mercies; they did not even acknowledge them to

* N. B. This was wrote a year ago, but I am afraid it is too true, even at this day.

be

be his gift. They did not see the hand of God in any of these things; they could account for them another way. O ye unwise, when will ye understand? Know ye not yet, there is a God that ruleth the world? What did ye see with your eyes? Was the race to the swift, or the battle to the strong? Have ye forgotten *Dettingen* already? Does not *England* know that God was there?—Or suppose your continuance in peace, or success in war, be the mere result of your own wisdom and strength; do ye command the sun and the clouds also? Can ye pour out or stay the bottles of heaven? But let it all be Nature, Chance, any thing—so God may have no hand in governing the earth!

29. Will his judgments bring us to a better mind? Do we *hear the rod and him that has appointed it*? Let us observe: what fruit do we find in those who are *even consumed by means of his heavy hand*? Let any that desires to be clearly satisfied herein visit the Hospitals of this City. Let him judge for himself, how the patients there receive God's fatherly visitation; especially there, because mercy also is mixed with judgment; so that it is evident *that the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth*. Go into any Ward, either of men or women, look narrowly from one end to the other: are they humbling themselves under the hand of God? Are they trembling under a sense of his anger? Are they praising him for his love? Are they exhorting one another, not to faint when they are rebuked of him? How do nine in ten of them spend the time, that important time from morning to evening? Why in such a manner, that you would not easily learn, from thence, whether they were Christians, Pagans or Mahometans.

Is there any deeper distress than this to be found? Is there a greater affliction than the loss of health? Perhaps there is, the loss of liberty, especially as it is sometimes circumstanced. You may easily be convinced of this, by going into either *Ludgate* or *Newgate*.

Newgate. What a scene appears, as soon as you enter! The very place strikes horror into your soul. How dark and dreary! How unhealthy and unclean! How void of all that might minister comfort! But this is little, compared to the circumstances that attend the being confined in this shadow of death. See that poor wretch, who was formerly in want of nothing, and encompassed with friends and acquaintance, now cut off, perhaps by an unexpected stroke, from all the cheerful ways of men; ruined, forsaken of all, and delivered into the hands of such masters and such companions! I know not, if to one of a thinking, sensible turn of mind, there could be any thing like it on this side hell.

What effect then has this heavy visitation of God, on those who lie under it for any time? There is perhaps, an exception here and there; but in general, they are abandoned to all wickedness, utterly divested of all fear of God, and all reverence to man; insomuch, that they commonly go out of that school compleatly fitted for any kind or degree of villainy, perfectly brutal and devilish, thoroughly furnished for every evil word and work.

30. Are your countrymen more effectually reclaimed, when danger and distress are joined? If so, the Army, especially in time of war, must be the most religious part of the nation. But is it so indeed? Do the Soldiery walk as those who see themselves on the brink of eternity? Redeeming every opportunity of glorifying God, and doing good to men, because they know not the hour in which their Lord will require their souls of them? So far from it, that a Soldier's religion is a by-word, even with those who have no religion at all; that vice and profaneness in every shape reign among them without controul; and that the whole tenor of their behaviour speaks, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

Have those who are exposed to still more danger, the *English* sea-forces, more religion than

those at land? It is said they were once remarkable for this: and it is certain Sir *Francis Drake*, feared God, as did most of his Commanders; and we have reason to believe, his mariners and sailors too. But what shall we say of the Navy that now is, more particularly of the ships of war? Is religion there? Either the power or the form? Is not almost every single man of war a mere floating hell? Where is there to be found more consummate wickedness, a more full, daring contempt of God, and all his laws, except in the bottomless pit? But here description fails: and the goodness of God endureth yet daily! But *shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* O that the prospect of national judgments may suffice! That we may remember ourselves, and turn unto the Lord our God, before his long-suffering mercy is at an end, and he pours out the vials of his wrath upon us!

But how small ground have we as yet to hope for this? For who will now *suffer the word of exhortation*? How few will *endure sound doctrine*, and the honest, close application of it? Do they not *say unto the seers, see not; and unto the prophets, prophesy smooth things*? And if a man will do thus, if he will *sew pillows to all arm-holes, and cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them; if he will prophesy of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people.*

31. I am sensible how nice a subject this is, and how extremely difficult it is to speak, as neither to say too little nor too much, neither more nor less than the cause of God requires. I know also, that it is absolutely impossible, so to speak as not to give offence. But whosoever is offended I dare not to be silent; neither may I refrain from plainness of speech: only I will endeavour to use all the tenderness I can consistently with that plainness.

In tender love then I ask, are there none among us (I speak to you, my brethren, who are priests and prophets of the Lord, set apart to *minister in holy things*, and to *declare the word of the Lord*) are there none among us who commit lewdness, as did those by whom *Israel was defiled*? Hath not the Lord seen a horrible thing, in some of the Prophets of this land also, even, that *they commit adultery, and (to conceal it) walk in lies*? God forbid that I should affirm this. I only propose (not maintain) the question. If there be such a wretch, I pray God to strike him to the heart, and to say, *Thou art the man!*

Are there none of you, like them, *mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink*? Yea, are there none that *err through strong drink, that are swallowed up of wine*? Are there not found those who say, *I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink: and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant*?

Alas, my brother! Is this the voice of a Minister of Christ? *A Steward of the mysteries of God*? Suppose you find at any time trouble and heaviness, *is there no help for you in your God*? Is not the God whom you serve able to deliver you from any plague or trouble? Is the being drunk with wine a better relief, than being filled with his spirit? Do you not understand this? Do you not know the Lord? Take heed you do not destroy both your own soul and them that hear you! O beware! If you know not his love, fear his power! Make haste to flee from the wrath to come, lest he smite you with a curse great as your sin, and sweep you away from the face of the earth.

32. Can such as you be said, to honour or fear God, any more than those spoken of by *Malachi*? May not God complain, *These priests have violated my law and profaned my holy things*? Yea, whenever you presume with those unhallowed hands, to touch the mysteries of God: whenever you

utter his name or his word with those unhallowed lips! But is it on this account only that God may say, *Both prophet and priest are profane?* May he not add, *they have put no difference between the holy and the profane; therefore I am profaned among them.* For is it not so? Do you put a difference between the holy and the profane, him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not? Do you put an effectual difference between them, even in the most solemn office of our religion? At the table of the Lord, do you take care to *separate the precious from the vile?* To receive all those who (as you may reasonably believe, *draw near with penitent hearts, and lively faith,* and utterly to reject those who testify against themselves, that they are without hope and without God in the world?

Nay, who dares repel one of the greatest men in his parish from the Lord's table? Even though he be a drunkard or a common swearer? Yea, though he openly deny the Lord that bought him? Mr. Stonehouse did this once. But what was the event? The gentleman brought an action against him, for the terror of all such insolent fellows, in succeeding times. And who was able and willing to espouse the cause? He alone who took it into his own hand: and before the day when it should have been tried here, called the plaintiff to answer at a higher bar.

33. O my brethren, is it not for want of your making this difference, as well as for many other abominations, that, with regard to some among us, (how many God knoweth) that scripture is now also fulfilled, *His watchmen are blind, they are ignorant, they are shepherds that cannot understand. — The Lord hath poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed their eyes: the prophets and the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed.*

If you ask what those other abominations are? I will speak in love and in the spirit of meekness. There are found among us covetous men, men *who mind earthly things*, who seek themselves and not Christ crucified, who *love the world, and the things of the world*: men in whom these words are still fulfilled, *Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you saith the Lord of hosts.* Yea, are there not those at this day, (O that I might be found to fear where no fear is!) who *make themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel?* Are there not those, who now *enlarge their desires as hell, who are as death and cannot be satisfied?* Who though they want neither food to eat nor raiment to put on, yet seek more and more preferment? Who are continually studying to *join house to house, and to lay field to field?* To grow rich in the service of that Master, who himself *hath not where to lay his head?* Is it not to these that those dreadful words belong, enough to cause the ears of him that heareth to tingle, *They are greedy dogs which can never have enough; they all look to their own way, (not the way of their Lord) every one for his gain, from his quarter.*

Is it strange if, among these, there should be some who are cruel, oppressive men? Inasmuch as covetousness knows no mercy, nor can a lover of money be a lover of his neighbour. Have not some been known even to *grind the face of the poor?* To strip, rather than clothe the naked? Some, who while they cried out, *as the Horse-leech, give, give,* would take, if it was not given; like those of old who said, *Thou shalt give it me now, and if not I will take it by force:* or those spoken of by Micah, *The Prophets bite with their teeth, and cry peace: and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.* Very great is the sin of these men before the Lord. If there be ten such now in the land, may God smite them

this day with terror and astonishment, that they may have no rest in their bones till their sin is done away!

34. Are you as watchful and zealous to gain souls, as those are to gain the gold that perisheth? Do you know, by experience what that meaneth, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up?* Or are you one of those watchmen who do not watch at all? Who neither know nor care when the sword cometh? Of whom the prophet saith, *They are dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*

Can it be supposed, that such shepherds will feed the flock? Will give to every one his portion of meat in due season? Will these warn every man, and exhort every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus? Will they take care to "know all their flock by name, not forgetting the men-servants and the women-servants?" Will they enquire into the state of every soul committed to their charge? And watch over each with all tenderness and long-suffering, as they that must give account? Marking how they either fall or rise? How these wax weary and faint in their mind; and those grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Who can do this, unless his whole heart be in the work? Unless he desire nothing but to spend and be spent for them; and count not his life dear unto himself, so he may present them blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Can any Shepherd do this (and if he do it not, he will never give any account with joy) who imagines, he has little more to do, than to preach once or twice a week? That this is the main point, the chief part of that office, which he hath taken upon himself before God? What gross ignorance is this? What a total mistake of the truth? What a miserable blunder touching the whole nature of his office? It is indeed a very great thing, To speak in the name of God; it might make him that is of the stoutest heart tremble, if he considered,

sidered, That every time he speaks to others, his own soul is at stake. But great, inexpressibly great as this is, it is perhaps the least part of our work. To seek and to save that which is lost, to bring souls from Satan to God, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the wicked, to convince the gainsayer : to direct their feet into the way of peace, and then keep them therein ; to follow them step by step, lest they turn out of the way, and advise them in their doubts and temptations ; to lift up them that fall, to refresh them that are faint, and to comfort the weak-hearted ; to administer various helps, as the variety of occasions require, according to their several necessities. These are parts of our office ; all this we have undertaken at the peril of our own soul. A sense of this made that holy man of old cry out, " I marvel if any Ruler in the Church shall be saved : " and a greater than him says, in the fulness of his heart, *Who is sufficient for these things.*

35. But who is not sufficient for these things, for the taking care of a parish, though it contain twenty thousand souls, if this implies no more than the taking care to preach there, once or twice a-week ; and to procure one to read prayers on the other days, and do what is called the parish-duty ? Is any trade in the nation so easy as this ? Is not any man sufficient for it, without any more talents, either of nature or grace, than a small degree of common understanding ? But O ! what manner of shepherds are those, who look no farther into the nature of their office, who sink no deeper into the importance of it than this ! Were they not such as these concerning whom the " word of the Lord came unto *Ezekiel*, saying, Woe be to the Shepherds that do feed themselves : should not the shepherds feed the flock ? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool ; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which

was

was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost. And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field. Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them."

I conjure you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, who hath bought them and us with his own blood, apply this each to his own soul. Let every man look unto God and say, Lord, *Is it I?* Am I one of these idle, careless, indolent Shepherds, that feed myself, not the flock? Am I one that cannot bark, slothful, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber? One of those who have not strengthened that which was diseased, neither healed that which was sick? *Search me O Lord, and prove me; try out my reins and my heart. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

36. Have I not, at least, *healed the hurt of thy people slightly?* Have I not said, *Peace, Peace, when there was no peace?*—How many are they also that do this? Who do not study to speak what is true, especially to the rich and great, so much as what is pleasing? Who flatter honourable sinners instead of telling them plain, *How can ye escape the damnation of hell?* O what an account have you to make, if there be a God that judgeth the earth? Will he not require at your hands the blood of all these souls, of whom ye are the betrayers and murderers? Well spake the prophets of your fathers, in whose steps you now tread, "They have seduced my people, and one built upon a wall, and another daubed it with untempered mortar. They strengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. They prophesy lies in my name saith the Lord. They say unto them that despise me, ye shall have peace, and unto them that walk after the imagination of their own heart, no evil shall come upon you." How

How great will your damnation be, who destroy souls, instead of saving them? Where will you appear, or how will you stand, *in that great and terrible day of the Lord!* How will ye lift up your head, when *the Lord descends from heaven, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his adversaries!* More especially on those who have so betrayed his cause, and done Satan's work under the banner of Christ! With what voice wilt thou say, "Behold me, Lord, and the Sheep whom thou hadst given me, whom I gave to the Devil, and told them they were in the way to heaven, till they dropped into hell?"

Were they not just such Shepherds of souls as you are, concerning whom God spake by Jeremiah? "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot; they have made my pleasant portion, a desolate wilderness: by *Ezekiel*, there is a conspiracy of her prophets, like a roaring lion, ravening the prey, they have devoured souls: and by *Zechariah*, Thus saith the Lord, feed the flock of the slaughter, whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty! and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not."

37. Is not this the real ground, the principal reason, of the present contempt of the Clergy? And long since was it assigned as such, by him who cannot lie. The same men of old, who made the Lord's people to transgress, thereby made themselves vile. They were despised both as the natural effect, and the judicial punishment of their wickedness. And the same cause the prophet observes to have produced the same effect, many hundred years after this. *Ye are departed out of the way saith the Lord; ye have caused many to stumble—Therefore have I also made you contemptible, and base before all the people.*

I have now, brethren, delivered my own soul, and in so doing, I have (as I proposed at first) used
great

great plainness of speech, as not studying to please men, but the Lord. The event I leave to him in whose name I have spoken, and who hath the hearts of all men in his hand.

I have brought you heavy tidings this day, and yet I cannot but be persuaded, that some of you will not count me your Enemy, because I tell you the Truth. O that all of us may taste the Good Word which we declare! May receive that knowledge of salvation, which we are commanded to preach unto every creature, through the remission of sins! My heart's desire is, That all of us to whom is committed the ministry of Reconciliation, may ourselves be reconciled to God, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant: That he may be henceforth unto us a God, and we may be unto him a people; that we may all know as well as preach, the Lord from the least unto the greatest: even by that token, *I am merciful to thy unrighteousness: thy sins I remember no more!*

III. 1. I have hitherto spoken more immediately to those, who profess themselves members of the Church of England. But inasmuch as I am a debtor also to those who do not, my design is now to apply to them also; and briefly to shew, wherein (I fear)) they are severally inconsistent with their own principles.

I begin with those who are at the smallest distance from us, whether they are termed Presbyterians or Independants. Of whom in general I cannot but have a widely different opinion, from that I entertained some years ago: as having since then conversed with many among them, *in whom the Root of the Matter is undeniably found: and who labour to keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man.* I cannot therefore doubt, but every serious man, of either one or the other denomination, does utterly condemn all that inward as well as outward holiness, which has been above described.

But

But do you, as a people, avoid what you condemn? Are no whoremongers or adulterers found among you? No children disobedient to their parents? No servants that are slothful or careless? That answer again? That do not honour their Masters as is meet in the Lord? Are there none among you that censure or speak evil of the Ruler of their people? Are there no Drunkards, no Gluttons, no luxurious men, no regular Epicures, none whose belly is their god, who, as their fortune permits, fare sumptuously every day? Have you no dishonest Dealers, no unfair Traders, no Usurers, or Extortioners? Have you no Liars, either for gain, or for good manners, so called? Are you clear of Ceremony and Compliment? Alas, you are sensible, in most, if not in all these respects, you have no small preheminance over us.

How much more sensible must you be of this, if you do not rest on the surface, but enquire into the bottom of Religion, the religion of the heart? For, what inward unholiness, what evil tempers are among us, which have not a place among you also? You likewise bewail that ignorance of God, that want of Faith and of the love of God and man, that inward idolatry of various kinds, that Pride, Ambition and Vanity, which rule in the hearts even of those who still have the form of godliness. You lament before God, the deep covetousness that eats so many souls as doth a Gangrene; and perhaps are sometimes ready to cry out, *Help, Lord, for there is scarce one godly man left. Lay to thine hand; for the faithful are diminished from the children of men!*

2. And yet you retain the truth that is after godliness, at least, as to the substance of it. You own what is laid down in scripture, both touching the nature and condition of Justification and Salvation. And with regard to the Author of Faith and Salvation, you have always avowed, even in the face of your enemies, That it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure: that it is his

his Spirit alone who teacheth us all things, all we know of the deep things of God : that every true believer has an *Unction from the Holy One* to lead him into all necessary Truth : that because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, *Abba, Father* ; and that this Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

How is it then, my brethren (so I can call you now, although I could not have done it heretofore;) how is it, that the generality of you also are fallen from your stedfastness? In the times of persecution ye stood as a rock, though all the waves and storms went over you. But who can bear ease and fulness of bread! How are you changed, since these came upon you! Do not many of you now (practically I mean) put something else, in the room of Faith that worketh by love? Do not some of you suppose that gravity and composedness of behaviour, are the main parts of Christianity? Especially, provided they neither swear, nor take the Name of God in vain. Do not others imagine, that to abstain from idle songs, and those fashionable diversions commonly used by persons of their fortune, is almost the whole of Religion? To which if they add family prayer, and a strict observation of the sabbath, then doubtless all is well! Nay my brethren, this is well, so far as it goes : but how little a way does it go toward Christianity? All these things, you cannot but see, are merely external ; whereas Christianity is an inward thing ; without which the most beautiful outward form is lighter than vanity.

Do not others of you rest in Conviction? Or good Desire? Alas what do these avail? A man may be convinced he is sick, yea deeply convinced, and yet never recover. He may desire food, yea with earnest desire, and nevertheless perish with hunger. And thus I may be convinced I am a sinner; but this will not justify me before God. And I may desire salvation (perhaps by fits and starts

starts for many years) and yet be lost for ever. Come close then to the point, and keep to your principles. Have you received the Holy Ghost; the Spirit which is of God, and is bestowed by him on all believers, *that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God?* The time is short. Do you experience now that Unction from the Holy One? Without which you confess outward Religion, whether negative or positive, is nothing. Nay, and inward Conviction of our wants is nothing, unless those wants are in fact supplied. Good desires also are nothing, unless we actually attain what we are stirred up to desire. For still, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, whatever he desires, he is none of his. O my brother, beware you stop not short! Beware you never account yourself a Christian, no not in the lowest degree, till God *hath sent forth the spirit of Christ into your heart*, and that Spirit bear witness with your spirit, *that you are a child of God.*

3. One step farther from us, are you who are called (though not by your own choice) Anabaptists. The smallness of your number, compared to that either of the Presbyterians, or those of the Church, makes it easier for you to have an exact knowledge of the behaviour of all your members, and to put away from among you every one that *walketh not according to the doctrine you have received.*

But is this done? Do all your members adorn the Gospel? Are they all *holy as he who hath called us is holy?* I fear not. I have known some instances to the contrary: and doubtless you know many more. There are unholy, outwardly unholy men, in your congregations also: men that profane either the Name or the Day of the Lord; that do not honour their natural or civil Parents; that know not how to possess their bodies in sanctification and honour; that are intemperate either in meat or drink, gluttonous, sensual, luxurious; that variously offend against Justice, Mercy or Truth, in their intercourse with their neighbour, and do not

walk by that Royal Law, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

But how is this consistent with your leading principles, "that no man ought to be admitted to baptism, till he has that Repentance whereby we forsake sin, and living faith in God, through Christ?"

For if no man ought to be admitted into a Church or Congregation, who has not actual Faith and Repentance, then neither ought any who has them not, to continue in any Congregation. And consequently an open sinner cannot remain among you, unless you practically renounce your main principle.

4. I refer it to your own serious consideration, whether one reason, why unholy men are still suffered to remain among you, may not be this: that many of you have unawares put Opinion in the room of Faith and Repentance? But how fatal a mistake is this? Supposing your opinion to be true, yet a true Opinion concerning Repentance is wholly different from the thing itself. And you may all your life have a true opinion concerning faith, and yet die an unbeliever.

Supposing therefore the opinion of Particular Redemption true, yet how little does it avail towards salvation? Nay, were we to suppose, That none can be saved who do not hold it, it does not follow, that all will be saved who do. So that if the one proved a man to be in ever so bad a state, the other would not prove him to be in a good one. And consequently, whosoever leans on this opinion, *leans on the staff of a broken reed.*

Would to God that ye would mind this one thing, to make your calling and election sure! That every one of you (leaving the rest of the world to him that made it) would himself repent and believe the gospel! Not repent alone (for then you know only the baptism of John) but believe, and be *baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* Are you still a stranger to that inward baptism, wherewith

wherewith all true believers are baptized? May the Lord constrain you to cry out, *how am I straitened till it be accomplished?* Even till the love of God inflame your heart, and consume all your vile affections. Be not content with any thing less than this! It is this loving faith alone which opens our way into *the general church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven!* Which giveth us to enter within the veil, where *Jesus our Forerunner is gone before us!*

5. There is still a wider difference in some points, between us and the people usually termed Quakers. But not in these points. You, as well as we, condemn *all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;* all those works of the devil which were recited above, and all those tempers from which they spring.

You agree, that we are all to be taught of God; and to be led by his Spirit: that the Spirit alone reveals all Truth, and inspires all Holiness: that by his inspiration men attain perfect love, the love which purifies them as he is pure: and that through this knowledge and love of God, they have power to do always such things as please him; to worship God, a Spirit, according to his own will, that is, in spirit and in truth.

Hence you infer, that formal Worship is not acceptable to God, but that alone that springs from God in the heart: you infer also, which they who are led by him, will use great plainness of speech, and great plainness of dress, seeking no outward adorning, but *only the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.*

I will look no farther now, than simply to enquire, whether you are consistent with these principles?

To begin with the latter: "He that is led by the Spirit will use great plainness of speech."

You would have said, "will use the plain language." But that term leads you into a grand mistake. That term, "the plain language," naturally

leads you to think of one particular way of speaking; as if plainness of speech implied no more, than the use of that *particular form*.

Alas! my brethren! Know ye not, that your ancestors designed this, only as a specimen of plain language? And is it possible that you should mistake the sample for the whole bale of cloth?

Consult the light God has given you, and you must see that plainness of speech does not lie in a single point, but implies an open, undisguised sincerity, a child-like simplicity in all we speak.

I do not desire you to refrain from saying *thou* or *thee*. I would not spend ten words about it. But I desire you whenever you speak at all, to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. I desire your words may be always the picture of your heart. This is truly plain language.

Either do not pretend to plain speech at all, or be uniformly plain. Are you so? I pray, consider. Do you never compliment? I do not suppose you say, "Sir, your very humble servant." But do you say no civil things? Do you never flatter? Do you not commend any man or woman to their face? Perhaps farther than you do behind their back. Is this plainness of speech? Do you never dissemble? Do you speak to all persons, high or low, rich or poor, just what you think, neither more nor less, and in the shortest and clearest manner you can? If not, what a mere jest is your plain language? You carry your condemnation in your own breast.

6. You hold also, That "he which is led by the Spirit, will use great plainness of dress, seeking no outward adorning, but only the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

And that, in particular, "he will leave gold and costly apparel, to those who know not God."

Now I appeal to every serious, reasonable man among you, Do your people act consistently with this principle? Do not many of your women wear gold upon their very feet? And many of your men use

use ornaments of gold? Are you a stranger to these things? Have you not seen with your eyes (such trifles as will scarce bare the naming) their canes and snuff boxes glitter, even in your solemn assembly, while ye were waiting together upon God? Surely, they are not yet so lost to modesty, as to pretend, That they do not use them by way of ornament. If they do not, if it be only out of necessity, a plain oaken-stick will supply the place of the one, and a piece of horn or tin will unexceptionably answer all the reasonable ends of the other.

To speak freely (and do not count me your enemy for this) you cannot but observe upon cool reflection, That you retain just so much of your antient practice, as leaves your present without excuse; as makes the inconsistency between the one and the other, glaring and undeniable. For instance: this woman is too strict a Quaker, to lay out a shilling in a Necklace. Very well: but she is not too strict to lay out fourscore guineas in a repeating Watch. Another would not for the world wear any Lace, no, not an Edging round her cap. But she will wear Point; and sees no harm in it at all, though it should be of twelve times the price. In one kind of Apron or Handkerchief she dares not lay out twenty shillings; but in another sort, lays out twenty pounds. And what multitudes of you are very jealous, as to the colour and form of your apparel, the (least important of all the circumstances that relate to it) while in the most important, the expence, they are without any concern at all? They will not put on a Scarlet or Crimson Stuff, but the richest Velvet, so it be black or grave. They will not touch a coloured Ribband; but will cover themselves with a stiff Silk from head to foot. They cannot bear Purple: but make no scruple at all of being clothed in fine Linen: yea, to such a degree, that the Linen of the Quakers is grown almost into a proverb.

Surely you cannot be ignorant, that the sinfulness of fine apparel, lies chiefly in the expensiveness. In that it is robbing God and the Poor; it is defrauding the fatherless and widow; it is wasting the food of the hungry, and withholding his raiment from the naked, to consume it on our own lusts.

7. Let it not be said, That this affects only a few among you, and those of the younger and lighter sort. Yes it does; your whole body: for why do you, who are Elder and Graver, suffer such things? Why do ye not vehemently reprove them? And if they repent not, in spite of all worldly considerations, expel them out of your Society? In conniving at their sin, you make it your own; you, especially who are Preachers. Do you say, "They cannot bear it; they will not hear:" alas, into what state then are ye fallen! But whether they will bear it or not, what is that to thee? Thou art to *speak, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.* To say the very truth, I am afraid you rather strengthen their hands in their wickedness. For you not only * do not testify against it in the congregation, but even sit at their table and reprove them not. Why then, Thou also art one of the *Dumb Dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*

I fix this charge upon every Preacher, in particular upon those who saw a young woman, daughter
to

* You say, "We do testify against it in the congregation." Against what? "Against gay and gaudy apparel." I grant it. But this is not the thing I speak of. You quite mistake my mark. Do you testify against the Costliness of their Apparel, however plain and grave it may be? Against the price of the Velvet, the Linen, the Silk, or Raiment of whatever kind? If you do this frequently and explicitly, you are clear. If not, own and amend the fault.

It is easy to discern how your people fell into this snare of the devil. You were at first a poor, despised, afflicted people. Then, what some of you had to spare, was little enough to relieve the needy members of your own Society. In a few years

to one of the Quakers in *London*, going to be married in apparel suitable to her diamond buckle, which cost a hundred guineas. Could you see this, and not call heaven and earth to witness against it? Then I witness against thee, in the Name of the Lord, Thou art a *blind Leader of the Blind*: thou *strainest at a gnat and swallowest a camel*.

Verily the sin both of Teachers and hearers, is herein exceeding great. And the little attempts toward plainness of apparel, which are still observable among you (I mean, in the colour and form of your clothes, and the manner of putting them on) only testify against you, That you were once what you know in your hearts you are not now.

8. I come now to your main Principle, "*We are all to be taught of God, to be inspired and led by his Spirit*. And then we shall worship him, not with dead form, but in spirit and in truth."

These are deep and weighty words. But many hold fast the words, and are utterly ignorant of their meaning. Is not this an exceeding common case? Are not you conscious, abundance of your friends have done so? With whom the being taught of God and led by his Spirit, are mere words of course, that mean just nothing. And their crude and indigested accounts, of the things they did not understand, have raised that deep

you increased in goods, and were able to relieve more than your own poor. But you did not bestow all that you had to spare from them, on the poor belonging to other Societies. It remained either to lay it up, or to expend it in superfluities. Some chose one way, and some the other.

Lay this deeply to heart, ye who are now a poor, despised, afflicted people. Hitherto ye are not able to relieve your own poor. But if ever your substance increase, see that ye be not straitened in your own bowels, that ye fall not into the same snare of the devil. Before any of you either lay up treasures on earth or indulge needless expence of any kind, I pray the Lord God to scatter you to the corners of the earth, and blot out your name from under heaven!

prejudice

prejudice against these great Truths, which we find in the generality of men.

Do some of you ask, "but dost thou acknowledge the Inward Principle?" I do, my friends: and I would to God every one of you acknowledged it as much. I say, all Religion is either empty Shew, or Perfection by Inspiration; in other words, the obedient Love of God, by the supernatural knowledge of God: yea, all that which is not of Faith, is sin: all which does not spring from this loving knowledge of God; which knowledge cannot begin, or subsist one moment, without immediate inspiration: not only all public worship, and all private prayer, but every thought, in common life, and word and work. What think you of this? Do you not stagger? Dare you carry the inward Principle so far? Do you acknowledge it to be the very Truth? But alas! what is the acknowledging it; dost thou experience this principle in thyself; what saith thy heart? Does God dwell therein? And doth it now echo to the voice of God? Hast thou the continual inspiration of his Spirit, filling thy heart with his love, as with a well of water, springing up into everlasting life?

9. Art thou acquainted with the Leading of his Spirit, not by notion only, but by living experience? I fear very many of you talk of this, who do not so much as know what it means. How does the Spirit of God lead his children, to this or that particular action? Do you imagine, it is by blind Impulse only? By moving you to do it, you know not why? Not so. He leads us by our Eye, at least as much as by the Hand; and by Light as well as by Heat. He shews us the way wherein we should go, as well as incites us to walk therein. For example. Here is a man ready to perish with hunger. How am I led by the Spirit to relieve him? First, by his convincing me, it is the Will of God I should; and secondly, by his filling my heart with love towards him. Both this light and
this

this heat are the gift of God ; are wrought in me by the same Spirit : who leads me, by this Conviction as well as Love, to go and feed that man. This is the plain, rational account of the ordinary leading of the Spirit. But how far from that which some have given !

Art thou thus led by the Spirit to every good word and work ? Till God hath thereby made thy Faith perfect ? Dost thou know what Faith is ? It is a loving, obedient sight of a present and reconciled God. Now where this is, there is no dead form ; neither can be, so long as it continues. But all that is said or done is full of God, full of spirit and life and power.

10. But perhaps, as much as you talk of them, you do not know the difference between Form and Spirit ; or between worshipping God in a formal way, and worshipping him in spirit and in truth.

The Lord is that Spirit. The seeing and feeling and loving him is spiritual Life. And whatever is said or done in the sight and love of God, that is full of spirit and life. All beside this is form, mere dead form ; whether it be in our public addresses to God, or in our private ; or in our worldly business, or in our daily conversation.

But if so, how poor and mean and narrow have your views and conceptions been ! You was afraid of formality in public worship. And reason good. But was you afraid of it no where else ? Did not you consider, That formality in common life, is also an abomination to the Lord ? And that it can have no place in any thing we say or do, but so far as we forget God ? O watch against it in every place, every moment, that you may every moment see and love God ; and consequently, at all times and in all places, worship him *in spirit and in truth*.

My brethren, permit me to add a few words, in tender love to your souls. Do not you lean too much on the spirit and power which you believe rested upon your Forefathers ? Suppose it did ; will that

that avail you, if you do not drink into the same spirit? And how evident is this! That whatever ye once were, ye are now shorn of your strength. Ye are weak and become like other men. The Lord is well nigh departed from you. Where is now the spirit, the life, the power? Be not offended with my plain dealing, when I beseech you who are able to weigh things calmly, to open your eyes and see multitudes even in the church, pursuing, yea and attaining the substance of spiritual life, and leaving you unto the shadow. Nay, a still greater evil is before you; for if ye find not some effectual means to prevent it, your rising generation will utterly cast off the shadow as well as the substance.

11. There is an abundantly greater difference still, according to your own account, between us who profess ourselves Members of the Church of England, and you who are Members of the Church of Rome. But notwithstanding this, do you not agree with us in condemning the vices above recited? Profaneness, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Adultery, Theft, Disobedience to Parents, and such like? And how unhappily do you agree with us in practising the very vices which you condemn?

And yet you acknowledge, (nay and frequently contend for this with a peculiar earnestness) that every Christian is called to be *zealous of good works*, as well as to *deny himself and take up his cross daily*. How then do you depart from your own principles, when you are gluttons, drunkards or epicures? When you live at your ease, in all the elegance and voluptuousness of a plentiful fortune! How will you reconcile the being adorned with gold, arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, with the *denying yourself and taking up your cross daily*? Surely while you indulge the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life, the excellent Rules of Self-denial that abound in your own Writers, leave you of all men most inexcusable.

12. Neither

12. Neither can this self-indulgence be reconciled, with the being zealous of good works. For by this needless and continual expence, you disable yourself from doing good. You bind your own hands. You make it impossible for you to do that good which otherwise you might. So that you injure the poor in the same proportion as you poison your own soul. You might have clothed the naked; but what was due to them, was thrown away on your costly apparel. You might have fed the hungry, entertained the stranger, relieved them that were sick or in prison. But the superfluities of your own table swallowed up that whereby they should have been profited. And so this wasting of thy Lord's goods, is an instance of complicated wickedness; since hereby thy poor brother perisheth for whom Christ died.

I will not recommend to you either the writings or examples of those whom you account Heretics, (although some of these, if you could view them with impartial eyes, might provoke you to jealousy.) But O! that God would write in your hearts the rules of self-denial and love, laid down by *Thomas a Kempis*! Or that you would follow, both in this and in good works, that burning and shining light of your own Church, the *Marquis de Renty*! Then would all who knew and loved the Lord rejoice to acknowledge you as the Church of the living God: when ye were zealous of every good word and work; and abstained from all appearance of evil: when it was hereby shewn that you were filled with the Holy Ghost; delivered from all unholy tempers: when ye were all *unblameable and unrebukeable, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, shewing forth to all Jews, Infidels and Heretics, by your active, patient, spotless love of God and man, the praises of him who had called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

13. Men and brethren, children of the stock of *Abraham*, suffer me to speak a few words to you also; you who do not allow, That *Messiah* the Prince is already come and cut off. However you so far hear *Moses* and the *Prophets*, as to allow, 1. That it is the *inspiration of the Holy One*, which giveth man understanding, and that all the true children of God are taught of God. 2. That the substance both of the Law and the *Prophets*, is contained in that one word, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself*. And 3. That the sure fruit of love is obedience, *ceasing from evil, and doing good*.

And do you walk by this Rule? Have you yourself that inspiration of the Holy One? Are you taught of God? Hath he opened your understanding? Have you the inward knowledge of the Most High? I fear not. Perhaps you know little more, even of the meaning of the words than a *Mahometan*.

Let us go a little farther. Do you love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength? Can you say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*? Do you desire God at all? Do you desire to have any thing to do with him, till you can keep the world no longer? Are you not content, so you enjoy the good things of the earth, to let God stand afar off? Only calling upon him now and then, when you cannot well do without him. Why then you do not love God at all, though you will sometimes condescend to use him. You love the world. This possesses your heart. This therefore is your god. You renounce the God of your fathers, the God of Israel; you are still uncircumcised in heart. Your own conscience bears witness, you in this no more hear *Moses* and the *Prophets*, than you do *Jesus of Nazareth*.

14. From Moses and the Prophets it has been shewn, that your forefathers were a *faithless and stubborn generation*; a generation which set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit cleaved not stedfastly unto God. And this you acknowledge yourselves. If you are asked, how is it that the promise is not fulfilled? Seeing the sceptre is long since departed from *Judah*, why is not *Shiloh* come? Your usual answer is, "Because of the sins of our fathers, God hath delayed his coming." Have you then reformed from the sins of your fathers? Are you turned unto the Lord your God? Nay, do ye not tread in the same steps? Except that single point of outward idolatry, what abomination did they ever commit, which you have not committed also? Which the generality of you do not commit still, according to your power? If therefore the coming of the Messiah was hindered by the sins of your forefathers, then by the same rule, your continuance therein will hinder his coming to the end of the world.

"Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God is, that he would gather the outcasts of Israel. And I doubt not, but when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, then all Israel shall be saved. But mean time is there not great cause that ye should say with *Daniel*, O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day, to the men of *Judah*, and unto all *Israel*. O Lord, we have sinned, we have rebelled against thee, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. Yet O our God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord hear! O Lord forgive! O Lord, hearken and do! Defer not, for thine own sake; for thy city and thy people that are called by thy name."

G

15. I cannot

15. I cannot conclude without addressing myself to you also, who do not admit either the Jewish or Christian Revelation. But still you desire to be happy: you own the essential difference between Vice and Virtue: and acknowledge, (as did all the wiser Greeks and Romans) that Vice cannot consist with Happiness. You allow likewise that gratitude and benevolence, self-knowledge and modesty, mildness, temperance, patience and generosity, are justly numbered among Virtues; and that ingratitude and malice, envy and ill-nature, pride, insolence and vanity, gluttony and luxury, covetousness and discontent, are Vices of the highest kind.

Now let us calmly enquire, how far your life is consistent with your principles.

You seek happiness. But you find it not. You come no nearer it with all your labours. You are not happier than you was a year ago. Nay, I doubt you are more unhappy. Why is this, but because you look for happiness there, where you own it cannot be found? Indeed, what is there on earth which can long satisfy a man of understanding? His soul is too large for the world he lives in. He wants more room.

*Æstuat infelix angusto limite Mundi,
Ut brevibus clausis Gyris, parvaque Seripho.*

He has already travelled through all which is called pleasure; diversions and entertainments of every kind. But among these he can find no enjoyment of any depth; they are empty, shallow, superficial things: they pleased for awhile, but the gloss is gone; and now they are dull and tasteless. And what has he next. Only the same things again? For this world affords nothing more. It can supply him with no change. Go, feed again: but it is upon one dish still. Thus,

Occidit miseros crumbe repetita.

Yet

Yet what Remedy under the Sun!

16. The sounder judgment, the stronger understanding you have, the sooner you are sated with the world. And the more deeply convinced, all that cometh is vanity; foolish, insipid, nauseous. You see the foibles of men in so much clearer a light, and have the keener sense of the emptiness of life. Here you are, a poor, unsatisfied inhabitant of an unquiet world; turning your weary eyes on this side, and on that side; seeking rest, but finding none. You seem to be out of your place: neither the persons nor things that surround you are such as you want. You have a confused idea of something better than all this; but you know not where to find it. You are always grasping for something which you cannot attain, no, not if you range to the uttermost parts of the earth.

But this is not all. You are only negatively unhappy, as finding nothing whereon to stay the weight of your soul; but positively so, because you are unholy: you are miserable, because you are vicious. Are you not vicious? Are you then full of gratitude to him, who giveth you life and breath, and all things? Not so; you rather spurn his gifts, and murmur at him that gave them. How often has your heart said, God did not use you well? How often have you questioned either his wisdom or goodness? Was this well done? What kind of gratitude is this? It is the best you are master of. Then take knowledge of yourself. Black ingratitude is rooted in your inmost frame. You can no more love God than you can see him; or than you can be happy without that love.

Neither (how much soever you may pique yourself upon it) are you a lover of mankind. Can love and malice consist? Benevolence and Envy? O do not put out your own eyes. And are not these horrid tempers in you? Do not you envy one man, and bear malice or ill will to another?

I know you call these dispositions by softer names; but names change not the nature of things. You are pained that one should enjoy what you cannot enjoy yourself. Call this what you please, it is rank Envy. You are grieved, that a second, enjoys even what you have yourself; you rejoice in seeing a third unhappy. Do not flatter yourself: this is malice, venomous malice, and nothing else. And how could you ever think of being happy, with malice and envy in your heart? Just as well might you expect to be at ease, while you held burning coals in your bosom.

17. I intreat you to reflect, whether, there are not other inhabitants in your breast, which leave no room for happiness there. May you not discover, through a thousand disguises, Pride? Too high an opinion of yourself? Vanity, thirst of praise, even (who would believe it?) of the applause of knaves and fools? Unevenness or soreness of temper? Proneness to anger or revenge? Peevishness, fretfulness, or pining discontent? Nay, perhaps even covetousness—And did you ever think happiness could dwell with these? Awake out of that senseless dream. Think not of reconciling things incompatible. All these tempers are essential misery. So long as any of these are harboured in your breast, you must be a stranger to inward peace. What avails it you, if there be no other hell? Whenever these fiends are let loose upon you, you will be constrained to own,

“ Hell is where’er I am : myself am hell ;”

And can the Supreme Being love those tempers, which you yourself abhor in all but yourself? If not, they imply guilt as well as misery. Doubtless they do. Only enquire of your own heart. How often in the mid career of your vice have you felt a secret reproof, which you knew not how to bear, and therefore stifled as soon as possible?

18. And

18. And did not even this point at an hereafter ! a future state of existence ? The more reasonable among you have no doubt of this ; you hardly suppose the soul once disengaged, will dwell again in a house of clay. But how will your soul subsist without it ? How are you qualified for a separate state ? Suppose this earthly covering, this vehicle of organized matter, whereby you hold commerce with the material world, were now to drop off ! Now, what would you do in the regions of immortality ? You cannot eat or drink there. You cannot indulge either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life. You love only worldly things ; and they are gone, fled as smoke, driven away for ever. Here is no possibility of sensual enjoyments ; and you have a relish for nothing else. O what a separation is this, from all that you hold dear ! What a breach is made, never to be healed !

But beside this, you are unholy : full of evil tempers : for you did not put off these with the body. You did not leave Pride, Revenge, Malice, Envy, Discontent behind you, when you left the world. And now you are no longer cheered by the light of the sun, nor diverted by the various objects : but those dogs of hell are let loose to prey upon your soul, with their whole, unrebated strength. Nor is there any hope, that your spirit will now ever be restored to its original purity : not even that poor hope of a purging fire, so elegantly described by the heathen Poet some ages before the notion was revived among the doctrines of the Romish Church.

—*Alia tenduntur inanes.*

Suspensæ ad ventos ; aliis sub gurgite vasto.

Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni—

Donec longa dies, exacto temporis orbe,

Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit

Æthereum sensum atque aurai simplicis ignem.

19. What a great gulph then is fixed between you and happiness, both in this world and that which is to come? Well may you shudder at the thought! More especially when you are about to enter on that untried state of existence. For what a prospect is this, when you stand on the verge of life, ready to launch out into eternity? What can you then think? You see nothing before you. All is dark and dreary. On the very best supposition, how well may you address your parting soul in the words of dying *Adrian*:

“Poor, little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight thou knowest not whither?”

Thy pleasing vein, thy hum'rous folly
Is all neglected, all forgot;
And pensive, wavering melancholy,
Thou hop'st, and fear'st thou know'st not what.”

“Thou knowest not what!” Here is the sting, suppose there were no other. To be thou knowest not what? Not for a month, or year, but through the countless ages of eternity! What a tormenting uncertainty must this be? What racking unwillingness must it occasion, to exchange even this known vale of tears, for the unknown valley of the shadow of death?

“And is there no cure for this?” Indeed there is an effectual cure; even the knowledge and love of God. There is a knowledge of God which unveils eternity, and a love of God which endears it. That knowledge makes the great abyss visible; and uncertainty vanishes away. That love makes it amiable to the soul, so that fear has no more place! But the moment God says, by the welcome Angel of Death, “Come thou up hither,” She

“Claps

“ Claps the glad wing and towers away,
And mingles with the blaze of day.”

20. See ye not, what advantage every way, a Christian has over you? Probably the reason you saw it not before was, because you knew none but nominal Christians; men who profess to believe more (in their way of believing) but had no more of the knowledge or love of God than yourselves. So that with regard to real, inward Religion, you stood upon even ground. And perhaps in many branches of inward Religion, the advantage was on your side.

May the Lord, the God of the Christians, either reform these wretches, or take them away from the earth! That lay this grand stumbling-block in the way of those who desire to know the will of God!

O ye who desire to know his will, regard them not! If it be possible, blot them out of your remembrance.

They neither can nor will do you any good. O suffer them not to do you harm. Be not prejudiced against Christianity by those who know nothing at all of it. Nay, they condemn it, all real, substantial Christianity; they speak evil of the thing they know not. They have a kind of cant word for the whole Religion of the heart. They call it Enthusiasm.

I will briefly lay before you the ground of the matter, and appeal to you yourselves for the reasonableness of it.

21. What a miserable drudgery is the service of God, unless I love the God whom I serve? But I cannot love one whom I know not. How then can I love God till I know him? And how is it possible I should know God, unless he make himself known unto me? By Analogy or Proportion? Very good. But where is that proportion to be found? What proportion does a creature bear to his Creator? What is the proportion between Finite and Infinite.

I grant

I grant the existence of the creatures demonstratively shews the existence of their Creator. The whole creation speaks, that there is a God. But that is not the point in question. I know there is a God. Thus far is clear. But who will shew me what that God is. The more I reflect, the more convinced I am, that it is not possible for any or all the creatures, to take off the vail which is on my heart, that I might discern this unknown God; to draw the curtain back which now hangs between, that I may see him which is invisible.

This vail of flesh now hides him from my sight. And who is able to make it transparent! So that I may perceive *through this glass*, God always before me, till I see him *face to face*.

I want to know this great God who filleth heaven and earth: who is above, beneath, and on every side, in all places of his dominion, who just now besets me behind and before, and lays his hand upon me. And yet I am no more acquainted with him, than with one of the inhabitants of *Jupiter or Saturn*.

O my friend, how will you get one step farther, unless God reveal himself to your soul.

22. And why should this seem a thing incredible to you? That God, a Spirit, and the Father of the spirits of all flesh, should discover himself to your spirit, which is itself the breath of God. *Divina Particula Auræ*? Any more than that material things should discover themselves to your material eye. Is it any more repugnant to Reason, that spirit should influence spirit, than that matter should influence matter? Nay, is not the former the more easily intelligible of the two? For there is the utmost difficulty in conceiving, how matter should influence matter at all. How that which is totally passive should act. Neither can we rationally account either for Gravitation, Attraction, or any natural motion whatsoever, but by supposing in all the Finger of God, who alone conquers that *Vis inertiae*.

inertia which is essential to every particle of Matter, and worketh in all.

Now if God should ever open the eyes of your understanding, must not the Love of God be the immediate consequence? Do you imagine you can see God without loving him? Is it possible in the nature of things? *Si virtus conspiceretur oculis*, said the old Heathen, *mirabiles amores excitaret sui*. How much more if you see him who is the original fountain, the great Archetype of all Virtue, will that sight raise in you a love that is wonderful, such as the gay and busy world know not of!

23. What benevolence also, what tender love to the whole of human kind, will you drink in, together with the love of God, from the unexhausted source of love? And how easy is it to conceive, that more and more of his image will be then transfused into your soul? That from disinterested love, all other divine tempers will, as it were, naturally spring? Mildness, gentleness, patience, temperance, justice, sincerity, contempt of the world; yea, whatsoever things are venerable and lovely, whatsoever are justly of good report.

And when you thus love God and all mankind, and are transformed into his likeness, then the commandments of God will not be grievous; you will no more complain, that they destroy the comfort of life. So far from it, that they will be the very joy of your heart; ways of pleasantness, paths of peace! You will experience here that solid happiness, which you had elsewhere sought in vain. Without servile fear or anxious care, so long as you continue on earth you will gladly do the will of God here, as the angels do it in heaven. And when the time is come that you should depart hence, when God says, "Arise and come away," you will pass with joy unspeakable out of the body, into all the fulness of God.

Now does not your own heart condemn you, if you call this Religion *Enthusiasm*? O leave that to those blind zealots, who tack together a set of Opinions.

nions and an outside worship, and call this poor, dull, lifeless thing, by the sacred name of *Christianity*. Well might you account *such Christianity* as this, a mere piece of empty pageantry, fit indeed to keep the vulgar in awe, but beneath the regard of a man of understanding.

But in how different a light does it now appear? If there be such a religion as I have sketched out, must not every reasonable man see, there is nothing on earth to be desired in comparison of it? —But if any man desire this, let him ask of God: he giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.

24. May you not ask, quite consistently with your principles, in some manner resembling this:

O thou Being of Beings, thou Cause of All, thou see'st my heart; thou understandest all my thoughts. But how small a part of thy ways do I understand! I know not what is above, beneath, on every side. I know not my own soul. Only this I know, I am not what I ought to be. I see and approve the Virtue which I have not. I do not love thee, neither am I thankful. I commend the love of mankind; but I feel it not. Thou hast seen hatred, malice, envy in my heart. Thou hast seen anger, murmuring, discontent. These uneasy passions harrow up my soul. I cannot rest, while I am under this yoke. Nor am I able to shake it off. I am unhappy, and that thou knowest.

Have compassion upon me, thou whose years do not fail! On me, who have but a short time to live. I rise up, and am cut down as a flower. I flee as it were a shadow. Yet a little while, and I return to dust, and have no more place under the sun.

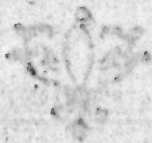
Yet I know thou hast made my soul to live for ever. But I know not where; and I am unwilling to try. I tremble, I am afraid to go thither, whence I shall not return. I stand quivering on the edge of the gulph; for clouds and darkness rest upon it. O God! Must I go always "creeping
with

with terrors, and plunge into eternity with a peradventure !”

O thou Lover of men, is there no help in thee ? I have heard (what indeed my heart cannot conceive) that thou revealest thyself to those that seek thee, and pourest thy love into their hearts : and that they who know and love thee, walk through the shadow of death and fear no evil. O that this were so ! That there were such an unspeakable gift, given to the children of men ! For then might I hope for it. O God, if there be, give it unto me ! Speak that I may see thee ! Make thyself known unto me also in the manner that thou knowest ! In any wise let me know thee and love thee, that I may be formed after thy likeness ! That I may be love, as thou art love ; that I may now be happy in thee ; and when thou wilt, fall into the abyss of thy love, and enjoy thee through the ages of eternity !

The End of Part II.



[illegible]

A

FARTHER APPEAL

TO MEN OF

REASON AND RELIGION.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, Oxford.

PART III.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

And when he came near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even Thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which belong unto thy Peace! Luke xix. 41, 42.

L O N D O N:

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A

FARTHER APPEAL

TO MEN OF

REASON AND RELIGION.

PART III.

I. 1. **N**OW, what can an impartial person think concerning the present state of Religion in England? Is there a nation, under the sun which is so deeply fallen from the very first principles of all Religion? Where is the country, in which is found so utter a disregard to even Heathen Morality? Such a thorough contempt of Justice and Truth, and all that should be dear and honourable to rational creatures?

What species of Vice can possibly be named, even of those that Nature itself abhors, of which we have not had, for many years, a plentiful and still increasing harvest? What sin remains either in Rome or Constantinople, which we have not imported long ago (if it was not of our native growth) and improved upon ever since? Such a complication of villanies of every kind, considered with all their aggravations, such a scorn of whatever bears the face of Virtue, such *injustice, fraud, and falsehood*: above all, such *perjury*, and such a *method of law*, we may defy the whole world to produce.

What

What multitudes are found throughout our land, who do not even *profess* any Religion at all? And what numbers of those who *profess much*, confute their profession by their *practice*? Yea, and perhaps by their exorbitant pride, vanity, covetousness, rapaciousness, or oppression, cause the very *name of Religion* to stink in the nostrils, of many (otherwise) *reasonable men*?

2. "However we have many thousands still, of truly *virtuous* and *religious* men." Wherein does their *Religion* consist? In *Righteousness* and true *Holiness*? In love stronger than Death? Fervent *Gratitude* to God? And tender *Affection* to all his *Creatures*? Is their Religion, the Religion of the *Heart*? A Renewal of the Soul in the Image of God? Do they *resemble* him they *worship*? Are they free from Pride, from Vanity, from Malice and Envy; from Ambition and Avarice, from Passion and Lust; from every uneasy and unlovely *Temper*? Alas, I fear neither they (the greater part at least) nor *you*, know what *this Religion* means; or have any more notion of it, than the peasant that holds the plough, of the Religion of a *Gymnosophist*.

It is well if the *genuine Religion* of Christ has any more alliance with what you call *Religion*, than with the *Turkish* Pilgrimages to Mecca, or the *Popish* worship of our Lady of Loretto. Have not you substituted in the place of the *Religion of the Heart*, something (I do not say equally *sinful*, but) equally vain, and foreign to the *worshipping* of God in *spirit and in truth*?—What else can be said even of *Prayer* (*public* or *private*) in the manner wherein you generally perform it? As a thing of *course*, running round and round, in the same dull track, without either the *knowledge* or *love* of God? Without one heavenly *temper*, either attained or improved? O what mockery of God is this!

And yet even *this Religion*, which can do you no good, may do you much harm. Nay, it is plain, it does: it daily increases your *Pride*, as you
measure

measure your goodness by the *number* and *length* of your performances. It gives you a deep *contempt* of those who do not come up to the full *Tale* of your Virtues. It inspires men with a *zeal*, which is the very fire of hell, furious, bitter, implacable, unmerciful; often to a degree that extinguishes all compassion, all good nature and humanity. Inso-much that the execrable *fierceness* of spirit, which is the natural fruit of such a Religion, hath many times, in spite of all ties, divine and human, broke out into open violence, into rapine, murder, sedition, rebellion, civil war, to the desolation of whole cities and countries.

Tantum hæc Religio potuit suadere malorum!

3. Now if there be a God, and one that is not a mere idle spectator of the things that are done upon earth, but a Rewarder of men and nations according to their works, what can the event of these things be? It was reasonable to believe, that he would have risen long ago, and maintained his own cause, either by sending the Famine or Pestilence among us, or by pouring out his fury in blood. And many wise and holy men have frequently declared, that they daily expected this; that they daily looked for the patience of God to give place, and judgment to rejoice over mercy.

4. Just at this time, when we wanted little of *filling up the measure of our iniquities*, two or three Clergymen of the Church of *England* began vehemently to *call Sinners to Repentance*. In two or three years they had sounded the alarm, to the utmost borders of the land. Many thousands gathered together to hear them; and in every place where they came, many began to shew such a concern for Religion, as they never had done before. A stronger *impression* was made on their minds, of the importance of things eternal, and they had more earnest *desires* of serving God, than they had ever had from their earliest childhood. Thus did God begin to draw them toward himself with the cords of love, with the bands of a man,

Many of these were in a short time deeply convinced of the *number* and *heinousness* of their *sins*. They were also made thoroughly sensible of those *Tempers*, which are justly hateful to God and man, and of their utter *ignorance* of God, and entire *inability*, either to know, love, or serve him. At the same time, they saw in the strongest light, the *insignificancy* of their *outside Religion*: nay, and often confessed it before God, as the most abominable *hypocrisy*. Thus did they sink deeper and deeper into that *Repentance*, which must ever precede *Faith* in the Son of God.

And from hence sprung *Fruits meet for Repentance*. The drunkard commenced sober and temperate; the whoremonger abstained from adultery and fornication; the unjust from oppression and wrong. He that had been accustomed to curse and to swear, for many years, now swore no more. The sluggard began to work with his hands, that he might eat his own bread. The miser learned to deal his bread to the hungry, and to cover the naked with a garment. Indeed the whole form of their life was changed. They had *left off doing evil* and *learned to do well*.

5. But this was not all. Over and above this *outward change*, they began to experience *inward religion*. *The love of God was shed abroad in their hearts*, which they continue to enjoy to this day. They love him, *because he first loved us*, and withheld not from us his Son, his only Son. And this love constrains them to love all mankind, all the children of the Father of heaven and earth, and inspires them with every holy and *heavenly temper*, the whole mind that was in Christ. Hence it is that they are now uniform in their behaviour, unblameable in all manner of conversation. And in whatsoever state they are, they have learned therewith to be content: insomuch that now they can in every thing give thanks: they more than patiently acquiesce, they rejoice and are exceeding glad, in all God's dispensations towards them. For as long as

as they love God (and that love no man taketh from them) they are always happy in God. Thus they calmly travel on through life, being never weary nor faint in their minds, never repining, murmuring or dissatisfied, casting all their care upon God, till the hour comes that they should drop this covering of earth and return unto the great Father of Spirits. Then especially it is, that they rejoice with joy *unspeakable and full of glory*. You who credit it not, come and see. See these living and dying Christians.

“ Happy while on earth they breathe;
 Mightier joys ordained to know,
 Trampling on Sin, Hell and Death,
 To the third heaven they go ?”

Now if these things are so, what reasonable man can deny (supposing the Scriptures to be true) that God is now visiting this nation, in a far other manner than we had cause to expect? Instead of pouring out his fierce displeasure upon us, he hath made us yet another tender of mercy: so that even when *Sin did most abound, Grace hath much more abounded.*

6. Yea, *the Grace of God which bringeth salvation*, present salvation from inward and outward sin, hath abounded of late years in such a degree, as neither we nor our fathers had known. How extensive is the change which has been wrought on the minds and lives of the people! Know ye not that the sound is gone forth into all the land? That there is scarce a city or considerable town to be found, where some have not been roused out of the sleep of Death, and constrained to cry out, in the bitterness of their souls; *What must I do to be saved?* That this *religious concern* has spread to every age and sex; to most orders and degrees of men? To abundance of those in particular, who in time past, were accounted monsters of wickedness, *drinking in iniquity like water*, and committing all *uncleanneſs with greedineſs*.

7. In

7. In what age has such a work been wrought; considering the *swiftness* as well as the *extent* of it? When have such *numbers* of sinners, in so *short* a time, been recovered from the error of their ways? When hath Religion, I will not say since the *Reformation*, but since the time of *Constantine the Great*, made so large a progress in any nation, within so small a space? I believe, hardly can either ancient or modern History, supply us with a parallel instance.

8. Let understanding men observe also the *depth* of the work, so *extensively* and *swiftly* wrought. It is not a slight or superficial thing: but multitudes of men have been so thoroughly *convinced of sin*, that their bones were *smitten asunder*, as it were with a sword dividing the very joints and marrow. Many of these have been shortly after so filled with *peace and joy in believing*, that whether they were in the body, or out of the body, they could scarcely tell. And in the power of this faith they have trampled under foot, whatever the world accounts either terrible or desirable: having evidenced in the severest trials, so fervent a love to God, so invariable and tender a good-will to mankind, particularly to their enemies, and such a measure of all the fruits of holiness, as were not unworthy the Apostolic Age. Now so deep a repentance, so firm a faith, so fervent love and unblemished holiness, wrought in so many persons, within so short a time, the world has not seen for many ages.

9. No less remarkable is the *Purity* of the Religion which has extended itself so *deeply* and *swiftly*. I speak particularly, with regard to the doctrines held by those, among whom it is so extended. Those of the Church of *England*, at least, must acknowledge this. For where is there a body of people in the Realm, who, number for number, so closely adhere to what our Church delivers as pure doctrine? Where are those who have approved and do approve themselves more *orthodox*, more sound in their opinions? Is there a *Socinian* or *Arian* among them

them all? Nay, were you to recite the whole catalogue of *Heresies*, enumerated by Bishop *Pearson*, it might be asked, Who can lay any one of these to their charge?

Nor is their Religion more *pure* from *heresy*, than it is from *superstition*. In former times, wherever an unusual concern for the things of God had appeared, on the one hand, *strange and enormous Opinions* continually sprung up with it; on the other, a *Zeal* for things which were no part of Religion, as though they had been essential branches of it. And many have laid as great (if not greater) stress on trifles, as on the weightier matters of the law. But it has not been so in the present case. No stress has been laid on any thing, as though it were necessary to salvation, but what is undeniably contained in the word of God. And of the things contained therein, the stress laid on each, has been in proportion to the nearness of its relation, to what is there laid down as the sum of all, the love of God and our neighbour. So *pure* from *superstition*, so thoroughly *scriptural* is that Religion, which has lately spread in this nation.

10. It is likewise *rational* as well as *scriptural*; it is as *pure* from *Enthusiasm*, as from *Superstition*. It is true, the contrary has been continually affirmed. But to *affirm* is one thing, to *prove* is another. Who will *prove*, that it is *Enthusiasm* to love God? Even though we love him with all our heart? To *rejoice* in the sense of his love to us? To *praise* him, even with all our strength? Who is able, to *make good* this charge, against the love of all mankind? Or, laying Rhetorical flourishes aside, to come close to the Question, and *demonstrate*, That it is *Enthusiasm*, in every state we are in, therewith to be content? I do but just touch on the *general heads*. Ye men of reason, give me a man, who setting raillery and ill names apart, will maintain this by dint of *Argument*. If not, own *this Religion* is the thing you seek; sober, manly, rational, divine: however

however exposed to the censure of those, who are accustomed to revile what they understand not.

11. It may be farther observed, the Religion of those we now speak of, is entirely clear from *bigotry*. (Perhaps this might have been ranked with *superstition*, of which it seems to be only a particular species.) They are in nowise *bigotted* to *Opinions*. They do indeed hold right opinions. But they are peculiarly cautious, not to rest the weight of Christianity there. They have no such overgrown fondness for any opinions, as to think those alone will make them Christians, or to confine their affection or esteem to those who agree with them therein. There is nothing they are more fearful of than this, lest it should steal upon them unawares. Nor are the *bigotted* to any particular branch, even of practical Religion. They desire indeed to be exact in every jot and tittle, in the very smallest points of *Christian Practice*. But they are not attached to one point more than another; they aim at uniform, universal Obedience. They contend for nothing *trifling*, as if it was important; for nothing *circumstantial*, as if it were essential to Christianity; but for every thing in its own order.

12. Above all, let it be observed, that this Religion has no mixture of *Vice* or *Unholiness*. It gives no man of any rank or profession, the least licence to sin. It makes no allowance to any person, for ungodliness of any kind. Not that all who follow after have attained this, either are already perfect. But however that be, they *plead* for no sin, either inward or outward. They condemn every kind and degree thereof, in themselves as well as in other men. Indeed most in themselves; it being their constant care, to bring those words home to their own case, *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

13. Yet there is not found among them that *bitter Zeal*, in points either of small or of great importance, that spirit of *Persecution*, which has so often accompanied

accompanied the Spirit of Reformation. It is an idle conceit, that the spirit of persecution is among the *Papists* only; it is wheresoever the devil, that old murderer, works; and he still *worketh in all the children of disobedience*. Of consequence, all the children of disobedience, will on a thousand different pretences, and in a thousand different ways, so far as God permits, persecute the children of God. But what is still more to be lamented is, that the children of God themselves, have so often used the same weapons and persecuted others, when the power was in their own hands.

Can we wholly excuse those venerable men, our great *Reformers* themselves, from this charge? I fear not, if we impartially read over any History of the *Reformation*. What wonder is it then, that when the tables were turned, Bishop *Bonnor* or *Gardiner* should make reprisals? That they should measure to others (indeed *good measure, shaken together*) what had before been measured to them? Nor is it strange, when we consider the single case of *Joan Boucher*, that God should suffer those (otherwise) holy men, Archbishop *Cranmer*, Bishop *Ridley*, and Bishop *Latimer*, to drink of the same cup with her.

14. But can you find any tincture of this in the case before us? Do not all who have known the love of God, know *what spirit they are of*? And that the *Son of Man* is not come to *destroy men's lives, but to save them*? Do they approve of the using any kind or degree of *violence*, on any account or pretence whatsoever, in matters of *Religion*? Do they not hold the *right* every man has to judge *for himself*, to be sacred and inviolable? Do they allow any method of bringing even those who are the farthest out of the way, who are in the grossest errors, to the knowledge of the truth, except the methods of Reason and Persuasion? Of Love, Patience, Gentleness, Long-suffering? Is there any thing in their *practice* which is inconsistent with this their constant *profession*? Do they in fact hinder their own relations

relations or dependents from worshipping God according to their own *conscience*? When they believe them to be in error, do they use force of any kind, in order to bring them out of it? Let the instances if there are such, be produced. But if no such are to be found, then let all reasonable men who believe the *Bible*, own, that a work of God is wrought in our land: and such a work (if we survey in one view the *extent* of it, the *swiftness* with which it is spread, the *depth* of that Religion which was so swiftly diffused, and its *purity* from all corrupt mixtures,) as it must be acknowledged, cannot easily be paralleled, in all these concurrent circumstances, by any thing that is found in the *English Annals*, since Christianity was first planted in this island.

II. 1. And yet those *who can discern the face of the sky, cannot discern the signs of the times*. Yet those who are esteemed wise men, do not know that God is now reviving his work upon earth. Indeed concerning some of these the reason is plain; they *know* not, because they *think* not of it. Their thoughts are otherwise employed; their minds are taken up with things of quite a different nature. Or, perhaps they may think of it a *little* now and then, when they have nothing else to do; but not seriously, or deeply; not with any closeness or attention of thought. They are too much in haste to *weigh* the facts whereof we speak, and to draw the just inference therefrom: nor is the conviction which they may sometimes feel suffered to sink into their hearts; but things that have a larger share in their affections soon destroy the very traces of it.

2. True it is, that there are some who think more deeply, who are accustomed to consider things from the foundation, and to lay circumstances together, that they may judge of nothing before they have full evidence: and yet even some of these appear to be *in doubt*, concerning the present work. Now, supposing it to be a work of God, how can this be accounted

accounted for? That they who so diligently enquire concerning it, do not know the time of their visitation? Perhaps because of the deeply rooted *prejudice* which they brought with them to the enquiry; and which still hangs on their minds, makes it scarce possible for them to form an impartial judgment. Perhaps, even a slight *prepossession* might occasion their stumbling on some of those rocks of *offence*, which by the wise permission of God, always did and always will attend any Revival of his Work. Nay, it may be, their very caution was carried to excess. They would not judge before they had *not* such evidence as the nature of the thing would not admit, or, at least, God did not see fit to give.

3. All this is very easy to conceive. But it may at first appear surprising, to find men of renown, men supposed to be endowed with knowledge, and with abilities of every kind, flatly, openly, peremptorily *denying*, that there has been any *unusual* work of God at all! Yea, a late eminent Writer goes farther yet, accounts it an instance of downright *Enthusiasm*, to *imagine*, that there is an *extraordinary* work now wrought upon the earth.*

It avails not to say, "No, he does not deny this, but he denies it to be the work of God." This is palpably trifling: for the work under consideration, is of such a nature (namely, the conversion of men from all manner of sin, to holiness of heart and life) that if it be at any time wrought at all, it must be the work of God: seeing it is God alone, and not any child of man, who is able to *destroy the works of the Devil*.

Yet neither is this difficult to be accounted for, if we consider things more closely: for the same *prejudice* which keeps some *in doubt*, may easily be conceived so to influence others, as to make them wholly *deny* the work of God. And this it may do in several ways: it may either bring them to question

* *Observation*, Part III.

the facts related, and hinder their endeavouring to be more fully informed: or prevent their drawing the inferences from those facts, as they would otherwise see to be plain and undeniable. Yea, and it will give ten-fold weight to the offences which must come, so as to over-balance all evidence whatsoever.

4. This also may account for the behaviour of those, who not content to suspend their judgment, or to *deny* the work of God, go farther still, even to the length of *contradicting* and *blaspheming*. Nay, some of these have expressed a deeper abhorrence, and shewn a stronger enmity against this, than they were ever known to do against Popery, Infidelity, or any Heresy whatsoever. Some have *persecuted* the *instruments* whom it pleased God to use herein, only *not to the death*: and others have treated in the same manner, all those whom they termed their *Followers*. A few instances of this it may be proper to mention, out of very many which might be recited.

5. On the 20th of *June*, 1743, a great multitude of people gathered together, chiefly from *Walsal*, *Darleston*, and *Bilston*, in *Wensbury Church-yard*, *Staffordshire*. They went from thence (after by sounding a horn they had gathered their whole company together) to Mr. *Eaton's* house, in the middle of the town, who was at that time *Constable*. He went to the door with his *Constable's* staff, and began reading the *Act of Parliament* against Riots; but the stones flew so thick about his head, that he was forced to leave off reading and retire. They broke all his windows, the door of his house, and a large clock in pieces. They went then to above fourscore other houses, in many of which there were not three panes of glass left.

6. About *Whitsuntide*, 1743, a mob arose at *Darleston* (near *Wensbury*) and broke all the windows (beside spoiling many of their goods) of *Joshua Constable*, *John Cotterel*, *Thomas Butler*, *Thomas Wilkinson*, *Aaron Longmore*, *William Powell*, *Ann Evans*,

Evans, Walter Carter, Samuel Carter, and Thomas Wilks.

Edward Martin, Ann Low, Joan Fletcher, Edward Horton, Mumford Wilks, Joshua Yardly and Robert Deacon, had all their windows broke twice.

James Foster, Widow Hires, and Jonathan Jones had their windows broke, and money extorted to save their houses.

James Foster and Joice Wood had their windows broken, and their goods broken and spoiled.

Jos. Spittle had his windows broke, his house broken open, some goods spoiled and some taken away.

William Woods had his windows broke twice, and himself compelled to go along with the rabble.

Elizabeth Lingham, a widow with five children, had her goods spoiled, her spinning wheel (the support of her family) broke: and her Parish Allowance reduced from 2s. and 6d. to 1s. and 6d. a week.

Valentine Ambersley had his windows broke twice, and his wife, big with child, beaten with clubs.

George Wynn had his windows and goods broken, and to save his house, was forced to give them drink.

Thomas Day had his windows and goods broken, and was forced to remove from the town.

Joseph Stubbs had his windows broke twice, and his wife so frightened, that she miscarried.

7. On June 20, 1743, *John Baker*, at the head of a large mob came to the house of *Jonas Turner*, at *West-Bramwich* near *Wensbury*, and asked him, "whether he would keep from these men that went preaching about, and go to the Church?" He answered, "I do go to the Church. But I never see any of you there." Presently one *Daniel Oniens* with a great club, broke great part of the window at one blow. Others laid hold of him, and dragged him about sixty yards, before he could get loose from them. Afterwards they broke all his windows, and threw into his house abundance of stones, to break his goods.

About four in the afternoon they came to the house of Widow *Turner* of *West-Bramwich*. They threw in the bricks and stones so fast, that she was forced to open the door and run out among them. One of her daughters cried out, "my mother will be killed!" On which they fell to throwing stones at her. She ran into a neighbour's house, but before she could shut the door, they broke the bottom off with a brick end. They followed her other daughter with stones, and one with a great stake. She ran into another house, much frightened, expecting to be murdered. The Widow asked "how can you come and abuse us thus?" On which, one came with a large club, and swore, "if she spoke another word, he would knock her on the head, and bury her in the ditch." Then he went and broke all the glass that was left. The same they did to many of the neighbouring houses.

8. On the 19th of *June*, *James Yeaman*, of *Walsal*, saw *Mary Bird* in her father's house at *Wensbury*, and swore, "by G— you are there now: but we will kill you to-morrow." Accordingly he came with a mob the next day; and after they had broken all the windows, he took up a stone, and said, "now by G— I will kill you." He threw it, and struck her on the side of the head. The blood gushed out, and she dropped down immediately.

The same day, they came to *John Turner's* house, and after they had broke all the windows, casements, and cieling, one of them cried out, "I suppose now you will go to your dear *Jesus's* wounds and see them opened for you."

Another of them took *Mr. Hands*, of *Wensbury*, by the throat, swore he would be the death of him, gave him a great swing round, and threw him upon the ground. As soon as he rose one *Equal Baker* gave him a blow on the eye, and knocked him down again. In about half an hour the mob came to his house, and broke all the windows, except about twenty panes. The kitchen windows they cleared, lead, bars and all, broke the window-posts, and

and threw them into the house. The shop was shut up (he being an Apothecary:) but they quickly broke it open, broke all the pots and bottles in pieces, and destroyed all his medicines. They broke also the shelves and drawers in the shop to pieces, and many of his household goods.

In the latter end of *June*, *John Griffiths*, of *Wensbury*, and *Francis Ward*, went to Mr. D. Justice of the Peace. They told him the condition they and their neighbours were in, their houses broken, and their goods spoiled. He replied, "I suppose you follow these Parsons that come about. I will neither meddle nor make."

9. On *January 13, 1743-4*, the mob rose again at *Darleston*, broke all the windows of all who followed *this Way* (except two or three who bought themselves off) broke open several houses, and took what they liked, the people belonging to them being fled for their lives.

About the same time the Reverend Mr. *E*— came to *Darleston*; and meeting some others at *Thomas Forshew's* they drew up a writing, and *Nicholas Winspur*, the Crier of the town, gave public notice, "that all the people of the Society must come to Mr. *Forshew's*, and sign it; or else their houses would be pulled down immediately." It was to this effect, - "that they would never read, or sing, or pray together, or hear these Parsons any more."

Several signed this through fear. They made every one who did, lay down a penny—"To make the mob drink."

About *Candlemas*, the wife of *Joshua Constable* of *Darleston* was going to *Wensbury*, when a mob met her in the road, threw her down several times, and abused her in a manner too horrible to write. A Warrant was procured for some of these. But one of them only was carried before Mr. *G*—, who came back and told his companions, that the Justice said, "that they might go home about their business." On this the mob rose again, came to

Joshua's house, and destroyed all the goods therein. They likewise broke and spoiled all his shop tools, threw the tiles off the roof of the house, and pulled down one room, the joist of which they carried away with them. All his gunlocks they took away; they tore in pieces all his wife's linen, cut the bed and bedstead, so that it was good for nothing, and tore her Bible and Common-prayer Book all to pieces. She and her husband retired to another house. But one telling the mob they were there, they swore "they would tear it down immediately, if the man let them stay any longer." So they went out into the frost and snow, not knowing where to lay their head.

10. On *Tuesday*, Jan. 31, 1743-4, *Henry Old* came to *John Griffith's* house, saying, "if he did not leave *following this Way*, he had a hundred men at his command, who should come and pull his house down." Soon after he brought some with him; but the neighbours gave him money, and sent him away for that time.

Monday, Feb. 6, between seven and eight at night, came part of the same company. Hearing them afar off, *John* and his wife fastened the door, and left the house. Some of the neighbours going in soon after found them destroying all they could. Two chairs and several bundles of linen were laid upon the fire. After they had destroyed what they could, they loaded themselves with clothes and meat, and went their way.

The same day public Notice was given at *Walsat*, by a paper fixt up there, "That all who designed to assist in breaking the windows, and plundering the houses of the *Methodists* at *Wensbury*, should be ready at ten o'clock, the next morning, on the *Church-Hill*."

11. The next morning, Feb. 7, (being *Shrove-Tuesday*) about half an hour after ten, great numbers of men were gathered together on the *Church-Hill*. Thence they marched down, some armed with swords, some with clubs, and some with axes. They

They first fell upon *Benjamin Watson's* house, and broke many of the tiles, and all the windows. Next they came to *Mr. Addinbrook's*, broke a fine clock, with many of his goods, and stole all the things they could carry away. The next house was *Jane Smith's* whose windows they broke, with what little goods she had. The next was *Mr. Bird's*, where they destroyed every thing they found, except what they carried away; cutting the beds in pieces, as they did all the beds which they could any where find. Thence they went to *Mr. Edge's* house: he was ill of a fever; so, for a sum of money, they past it over. The next house was *Mr. Hand's*. They broke all his counters, boxes and drawers, and all (except some bedsteads) that axe or hammer could break. They spilt all his drugs and chymical medicines, and stole every thing they could carry, even all his and his wife's wearing apparel, beside what they had on.

12. *Mr. Eaton's* house was next. They broke all his windows, and all his inside doors in pieces, cut the lead off his house, destroyed or stole whatever they could lay their hands on. Some Gentlemen offered to stop them, if he would sign a paper implying, "That he would never hear these Parsons more." But he told them, "He had felt already what a wounded conscience was; and by the grace of God he would wound his conscience no more."

After they had done at *Mr. Eaton's*, they plundered several other houses in *Wensbury* and *West-Bramwick*. It is scarce possible to describe the outrages they committed. Only they left them they plundered alive.

While they were plundering *John Turner's* house, he waded through the brook, to try if he could save some of his goods, which one *David Garrington* was carrying away. Upon which *Garrington* told him, "It would be the same here as it was in *Ireland*, for there would be a Massacre very quickly. And he wished it was now."

13. About

13. About eleven o'clock, *Sarah* the wife of *John Sheldon*, being told, the mob was coming to her house, went and met them at the gate. She asked *John Baker*, their Captain, "What they were come for?" He answered, "If she would have nothing more to do with those people, not a pennyworth of her goods should be hurt." She made no reply. Then they broke the door open, and began breaking and plundering the goods. One coming out with a fire-shovel, she begged him, "not to take that away." He swore, if she spoke another word, he would beat her brains out."

John Sheldon was this while helping *Thomas Parkes* to hide his goods, though he knew by the noise they were breaking his own to pieces. Between two and three he came to his house with *William Sitch*. *William* asked *Sarah*, how she did? Saying, "For his part, he took joyfully the spoiling of his goods." She answered, that "seeing so much wickedness, she could not rejoice; but she blessed God she could bear it patiently, and found not the least anger in her." *John Sheldon* seeing the spoil they had made, smiled and said, "Here is strange work." His wife told him, "if she had complied with their terms, not one pennyworth would have been hurt." He replied, "That if she had complied to deny the Truth, and he had found his goods whole on that account, he should never have been easy as long as he lived; but he blessed God that she had rather chosen to suffer wrong."

The mob continued to rise for six days together. The damage they did in and about *Wensbury*, at the very lowest computation, amounted to five hundred and four pounds, seventeen shillings.

Wednesday, October 19, 1743, I came to *Birmingham*, in my way to *Newcastle*. Thursday, October 20, several persons from *Wensbury* earnestly desired me to call there. I yielded to their importunity, and went. I was sitting and writing at *Francis Ward's*, in the afternoon; when the cry arose,

"That

"That the *Darleston* mob had beset the house." I called together those that were in the house, and prayed, that God would *scatter the people that delight in war*. And it was so: one went one way, and one another; so that in half an hour the house was clear on every side. But, before five, they returned with greater numbers. The cry of all was, "bring out the Minister!"

I desired one to bring the Captain of the mob into the house. After a few words interchanged, the lion was as a lamb. I then desired him to bring in one or two more of the most angry of his companions. He did so; and, in two minutes, their mind was changed too. I then bade them who were in the room make way, that I might go out among the people. As soon as I was in the midst of them, I said, "Here I am: what do you want with me?" Many cried out, "We want you to go with us to the Justice." I told them, "That I will with all my heart." So I walked before, and two or three hundred of them followed, to *Bentley-Hall*, two miles from *Wensbury*. But a servant came out, and told them, "Justice Lane was not to be spoken with." Here they were at a stand, till one advised to go to Justice *Persehouse*, at *Walsal*. About seven we came to his house; but he also sent word, "That he was in bed, and could not be spoken with."

All the company were now pretty well agreed, to make the best of their way home; but we had not gone a hundred yards, when the mob of *Walsal* came pouring in like a flood. The *Darleston* mob stood against them for awhile; but, in a short time, some being knocked down, and others much hurt, the rest ran away, and left me in their hands.

To attempt to speak was vain, the noise being like that of taking a city by storm: so they dragged me along till they came to the town, at a few hundred yards distance; where, seeing the door of a large house open, I endeavoured to go in: but a man, catching me by the hair, (my hat having been caught

caught away at the beginning) pulled me back into the middle of the mob; who were as so many ramping and roaring lions. They hurried me from thence, through the main street, from one end of the town to the other. I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness.

At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open, I made towards it, and would have gone in, but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying, "They would pull the house down, if I did." However, here I stood, and asked, "Are you willing to hear me speak?" Many cried out, "No, no; knock his brains out." Others said, "Nay; but we will hear him speak first." I began asking, "What hurt have I done you? Whom among you have I wronged in word or deed?" And continued speaking till my voice failed. Then the floods lifted up their voice again; many crying out, "Bring him away, bring him away!"

Feeling my strength renewed, I spoke again, and broke out aloud into prayer. And now, one of the men who had headed the mob before, turned, and said, "Sir, follow me: not a man shall touch the hair of your head." Two or three more confirmed his words. At the same time the Mayor (for it was he that stood in the shop) cried out, "For shame, for shame; let him go." An honest butcher spoke to the same effect; and seconded his words by laying hold of four or five one after another, who were running on the most fiercely. The people then dividing to the right and left, those three or four men who had spoken before, took me between them, and carried me through the midst; bitterly protesting, "They would knock down any that touched him." But on the bridge the mob rallied again: we therefore went on one side, over a Mill-dam, and thence through the meadows, till a little after ten, God brought me safe to *Wensbury*, having lost only a part of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands.

I believe

I believe every reasonable man will allow, that nothing can possibly excuse these proceedings: seeing they are open, bare-faced violations both of justice and mercy, and of all laws divine and human.

III. I suppose no *Protestant* will undertake to defend such proceedings, even towards the vilest miscreants. But abundance of *excuses* have been made, if not for *opposing* it thus, yet for *denying* this work to be of God, and for not acknowledging the time of our visitation.

1. Some alledge, that the *Doctrines* of these men are *false*, *erroneous*, and *enthusiastic*; that they are *new*, and unheard of till of late: that they are Quakerism, Fanaticism, Popery.

This whole pretence has been already cut up by the roots; it having been shewn at large, that every branch of this Doctrine, is the plain Doctrine of Scripture, interpreted by our own Church. Therefore it cannot be either *false* or *erroneous*, provided the Scripture be true. Neither can it be *enthusiastic*, unless the same epithet belongs to our Articles, Homilies and Liturgy. Nor yet can these Doctrines be termed *New*: no newer, at least than the reign of Queen *Elizabeth*; not even with regard to the way of expression, or the manner wherein they are proposed. And as to the substance, they are more antient still; as antient not only as the Gospel, as the times of *Isaiah*, or *David*, or *Moses*, but as the first Revelation of God to man. If therefore they were unheard of till of late, in any that is termed a Christian country, the greater guilt is on those, who as Ambassadors of Christ, ought to publish them day by day.

Fanaticism, if it means any thing at all, means the same with *enthusiasm*, or religious madness, from which (as was observed before) these doctrines are distant as far as the East from the West. However, it is a convenient word to be thrown out, upon any thing we do not like; because scarce one reader in a thousand,

a thousand, has any idea of what it means. If any part of this doctrine is held by the *Quakers*, there is the more reason to rejoice. I would to God they held it all: though the Doctrine itself, would be neither better nor worse for this.

Popery in the mouth of many men means just nothing; or at most, "Something very horrid and bad." But *Popery*, properly speaking, is, *the distinguishing Doctrines* of the Church of Rome. They are summed up in the *Twelve Articles* which the Council of Trent added to the *Nicene Creed*. Now who can find the least connexion between any of these, and the Doctrines whereof we are speaking?

2. Others alledge, "Their Doctrine is too strict. They make the way to heaven too narrow." And this is in truth the original objection, (as it was almost the only one for some time) and is secretly at the bottom of a thousand more, which appear in various forms. But do they make the way to heaven any narrower, than our Lord and his Apostles made it? Is their Doctrine stricter than that of the Bible? Consider only a few plain texts, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.*——*For every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment.*——*Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* If their Doctrine is stricter than this, they are to blame. But you know in your conscience, it is not. And who can be one jot less strict, without *corrupting the word of God*? Can any Steward of the mysteries of God be found faithful, if he change any part of that sacred Depositum? No. He can abate nothing; he can soften nothing. He is constrained to declare to all men, I may not bring down the Scripture to your taste. You must come up to it, or perish for ever."

3. This is the real ground of that other popular cry, concerning "the Uncharitableness of these men." Uncharitable are they? In what respect?

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Do they not feed the hungry and clothe the naked? No, that is not the thing. They are not wanting in this. But they are so uncharitable in judging! They think none can be saved, but those of their own way. They damn all the world beside themselves.

What do you mean? "They think none can be saved, but those of their own way." Most surely they do. For as there is but one heaven, so there is but one way to it: even the way of faith in Christ, (for we speak not of Opinions, or outward modes of worship) the way of love to God and man, the Highway of Holiness. And is it uncharitable, to think or say, that none can be saved, but those who walk in this way? Was he then uncharitable, who declared, *He that believeth not shall be damned*? Or he that said, *Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*? And again: *though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, yet if I have not (ἀγάπη) Charity, Love, all this profiteth me nothing.*"

"But they damn all, you say, beside themselves." Damn all! What kind of word is this? They damn no man. None is able to damn any man, but the Lord and Judge of all. What you probably mean by that strange expression is, they declare that God condemns all, beside those who believe in Jesus Christ, and love him and keep his commandments. And so must you also, or you sin against God, and your neighbour, and your own soul. But is there any uncharitableness in this? In warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come? On the contrary, not to warn a poor, blind, stupid wretch, that he is hanging over the mouth of hell, would be so inexcusable a want of charity, as would bring his blood upon our head.

4. But there is no room for dispute, touching these doctrines in general, seeing our Lord gives you so plain a rule, by which you may easily and

infallibly know, whether they be of God. *The tree is known by its fruit: either therefore make the tree good, and its fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt.* (Matt. xii. 33.) Now what fruit does the tree before us bring forth? Look and see; believe your own eyes and ears. Sinners leave their sins. The servants of the devil become the servants of God. Is this good or evil fruit? That Vice loses ground, and Virtue, practical Religion, gains? O dispute no more. Know the tree by its fruit. Bow and own the finger of God.

5. But many, who own these doctrines to be of God, yet cannot be reconciled to the instruments he hath made use of. A very common exception taken against these is (and was from the beginning) "that they are so young." Therefore (abundance of men have readily inferred) "this work cannot be of God."

Perhaps they are not so young as you conceive. Mr. *Whitefield* is now upwards of thirty; my brother is thirty-seven years of age. I have lived above forty-two years. And a gentleman in *Cornwall*, for whom I often preach, has the merit of having lived threescore and seventeen years.

But, supposing the antecedent true, what a consequence is this? What shadow of Scripture have you to support it? Doth not God send by whom he will send? And who shall say to him, What dost thou? "These are too young; send elder men." What shadow of reason? Is it not possible, that a person of thirty or forty may have as true a judgment in the things of God, and as great a blessing attending his preaching, as one of fifty or fourscore?

I wish you would explain yourself a little on this head;

Scire velim, verbo pretium quotus arroget annus?

How

How old do you require a man to be, before God shall have leave to speak by his mouth?—O my brethren, who could have believed any serious man would once have named such an argument as this? Seeing both Scripture and Reason teach, that God herein giveth account to none, of his ways. But he worketh by whomsoever he will work; he sheweth mercy by whom he will shew mercy.

6. "But there are only a few young heads." I cannot but observe here, what great pains have been taken, what diligence shewn, to make and to keep them few. What arts have not been used, to keep back those, of the Clergy in particular, who have been clearly convinced from time to time, that they ought to join hearts and hands in the work? On this occasion, it has been accounted meritorious to say all manner of evil of us falsely: to promise them whatever their hearts desired, if they would refrain from these men: and, on the other hand, to threaten them with heavy things, if ever they went among them more. So that how fully soever they were convinced, they could not act according to their conviction, unless they could give up at once all thought of preferment, either in Church or State; nay, all hope of even a Fellowship, or poor Scholarship in either University. Many also have been threatened, that if they went on in this way, what little they had should be taken from them. And many have, on this very account, been disowned by their dearest friends and nearest relations. So that there was no possibility the number of these labourers should ever be increased at all, unless by those who could break through all these ties, who desired nothing in the present world, who counted neither their fortunes, nor friends, nor lives, dear unto themselves, so they might only keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.

7. But what do you infer from their fewness? That because they are few, therefore God cannot work by them? Upon what Scripture do you ground this? I thought it was the same to him to save by many or by few. Upon what reason? Why cannot God save ten thousand souls by one man, as well as by ten thousand? How little, how inconsiderable a circumstance is number before God? Nay, is there not reason to believe, that whensoever God is pleased to work a great deliverance, spiritual or temporal, he may first say, as of old, The people are too many for me to give the *Midianites* into their hands? May he not purposely chuse few as well as inconsiderable instruments, for the greater manifestation of his own glory? Very few, I grant, are the instruments now employed; yet a great work is wrought already. And the fewer they are by whom this large harvest hath hitherto been gathered in, the more evident must it appear to unprejudiced minds, That the work is not of man, but of God.

8. "But they are not only few, but unlearned also." This is another grievous offence; and is by many esteemed a sufficient excuse, for not acknowledging the work to be of God.

The ground of this offence is partly true. Some of those who now preach are unlearned. They neither understand the antient languages, nor any of the branches of philosophy. And yet this objection might have been spared, by many of those who have frequently made it: because they are unlearned too (though accounted otherwise.) They have not themselves the very thing they require in others.

Men in general are under a great mistake with regard to what is called "the Learned World." They do not know, they cannot easily imagine, how little learning there is among them. I do not speak of abstruse learning; but of what all Divines, at least of any note, are supposed to have, viz. The knowledge of the Tongues, at least Latin, Greek,

Greek, and Hebrew, and of the common, Arts and Sciences.

How few men of learning, so called, understand Hebrew? Even so far as to read a plain chapter in Genesis? Nay, how few understand Greek? Make an easy experiment. Desire that grave man, who is urging this objection, only to tell you the English of the first paragraph that occurs in one of *Plato's* Dialogues? I am afraid we may go farther still. How few understand Latin? Give one of them an Epistle of *Tully*, and see how readily he will explain it without his Dictionary. If he can hobble through that, 'tis odds but a *Georgick* in *Virgil*, or a *Satire* of *Perfius* sets him fast.

And with regard to the Arts and Sciences: how few understand so much as the general principles of Logic? Can one in ten of the Clergy (O grief of heart!) Or of the Masters of Arts in either University, when an argument is brought, tell you even the Mood and Figure wherein it is proposed? Or compleat an *Enthymeme*? Perhaps, you do not so much as understand the term: supply the premises which is wanting, in order to make it a full *Categorical Syllogism*. Can one in ten of them demonstrate a *Problem* or *Theorem* in *Euclid's Elements*? Or define the common terms used in *Metaphysics*? Or intelligibly explain the first Principles of it? Why then will they pretend to that learning, which they are conscious to themselves they have not? Nay, and censure others who have it not, and do not pretend to it? Where are Sincerity and Candor fled?

It will easily be observed, that I do not depreciate Learning of any kind. The knowledge of the Languages is a valuable talent; so is the knowledge of the Arts and Sciences. Both the one and the other may be employed to the glory of God, and the good of men. But yet I ask, Where hath God declared in his word, that he cannot, or will not make use of men that have it not?

Has *Moses*, or any of the Prophets affirmed this? Or our Lord? Or any of his Apostles? You are sensible all these are against you. You know the Apostles themselves, all except St. *Paul*, were ἀνόροις ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἀδιδακτοί common, unphilosophical, unlettered men.

9. "What! Then you make yourselves like the Apostles." Because this silly objection has so often urged, I will for once spend a few words upon it, though it does not deserve that honour. Why, must not every man, whether Clergyman or Laymen, be in some respects, like the Apostles, or go to hell? Can any man be saved, if he be not holy, like the Apostles? A follower of them, as they were of Christ? And ought not every Preacher of the Gospel, to be in a peculiar manner like the Apostles, both in holy tempers, in exemplariness of life, and in his indefatigable labours for the good of souls? Woe unto every Ambassador of Christ, who is not like the Apostles in this! In holiness; in making full proof of his ministry; in spending and being spent for Christ! We cannot, and therefore we need not be like them, in working outward miracles. But we may and ought, in working together with God for the salvation of men. And the same God who was always ready to help their infirmities, is ready to help ours also. He who made them workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, will teach us also rightly to divide the word of truth. In this respect likewise, in respect of his having help from God, for the work whereunto he is called, every Preacher of the Gospel is like the Apostles. Otherwise he is of all men most miserable.

men, have I am bold to affirm, that these unlettered
10. And help from God for that great work, the saving souls from death; seeing he hath enabled, and doth enable them still, to turn many to righteousness. Thus hath he *destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nought the understanding of the prudent*. When they imagined they had effectually
shut

shut the door, and locked up every passage, whereby any help could come to two or three Preachers, weak in body as well as soul; who they might reasonably believe would, humanly speaking, wear themselves out in a short time: when they had gained their point, by securing (as they supposed) all the men of learning in the nation; *He that sitteth in heaven laughed them to scorn*, and came upon them by a way they thought not of. *Out of the stones he raised up those who should beget children to Abraham.* We had no more foresight of this than you. Nay, we had the deepest prejudices against it: until we could not but own, that God gave wisdom from above to these unlearned and ignorant men; so that the work of the Lord prospered in their hand, and sinners were daily converted to God.

Indeed in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental Divinity, as few of our Candidates for holy Orders, even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love) are able to do. But oh! what manner of examination, do most of those Candidates go through? And what proof are the Testimonials commonly brought (as solemn as the form is wherein they run) either of their piety or knowledge, to whom are intrusted those sheep which God hath purchased with his own blood!

11. "But they are Laymen. You seem to be sensible yourself, of the strength of this objection. For as many as you have answered, I observe you have never once so much as touched on this."

I have not. Yet it was not distrust of my cause, but tenderness to you which occasioned my silence. I had something to advance on this head also: but I was afraid you could not bear it. I was conscious to myself, that some years since, to touch this point, was to touch the apple of my eye. And this makes

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me almost unwilling to speak now; lest I should shock the prejudices I cannot remove.

Suffer me, however, just to intimate to you some things, which I would leave to your farther consideration. The Scribes of old, who were the ordinary Preachers among the Jews, were not Priests; they were not better than Laymen. Yea, many of them were incapable of the Priesthood, being of the Tribe of *Simcon*, not of *Levi*.

Hence probably it was, that the Jews themselves never urge it as an objection to our Lord's preaching (even those who did not acknowledge or believe, that he was sent of God in an extraordinary character) that he was no Priest after the Order of *Aaron*. Nor indeed could be; seeing he was of the tribe of *Judah*.

Nor does it appear, that any objected this to the Apostles. So far from it, that at *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, we find the Ruler of the Synagogue sending unto Paul and Barnabas, strangers just come into the city, *saying, Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on*, Acts xiii. 15.

If we consider these things, we shall be less surprised at what occurs in the 8th chapter of the Acts; *At that time there was a great persecution against the Church, and they were all scattered abroad*: (i. e. all the Church, all the Believers in Jesus throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, (v. 1.) *Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word*, (v. 4.) Now, what shadow of reason have we to say, or think, that all these were *ordained* before they preached?

12. If we come to later times; Was Mr. *Calvin* ordained? Was he either Priest or Deacon? And were not most of those whom it pleased God to employ in promoting the Reformation abroad, Laymen also? Could that great work have been promoted at all in many places, if Laymen had not preached? And yet how seldom do the very Papists urge this, as an objection against the Reformation? Nay, as rigorous as they are in things of this kind, they themselves appoint, even in some
this

of their strictest Orders, that "if any Lay-brother believes himself called of God, to preach as a Missionary, the Superior of the Order, being informed thereof, shall immediately send him away."

In all Protestant Churches it is still more evident, that Ordination is not held a necessary prerequisite of preaching: for in Sweden, in Germany, in Holland, and, I believe, in every reformed Church in Europe, it is not only permitted, but required, that before any one is ordained, (before he is admitted even into Deacon's Orders, wherever the distinction between Priests and Deacons is retained) he should publicly preach a year or more, *ad probandum facultatin*. And for this practice, they believe they have the authority of an express command of God: *let these first be proved: then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless,* 1 Tim. iii. 10.

13. "In England, however, there is nothing of this kind; no Layman, permitted to speak in public." No! Can you be ignorant, that in a hundred Churches they do it continually? In how many (particularly in the West of England) does the Parish-Clerk read one of the lessons? (In some he reads the whole service of the Church, perhaps, every Lord's day.) And do not other Laymen constantly do the same thing, yea, in our very Cathedrals? Which being under the more immediate inspection of the Bishops, should be patterns to all other Churches.

Perhaps it will be said, "but this is not preaching." Yes, but it is, essentially such. For what is it to preach, but *pradicare Verbum Dei*? To publish the word of God? And this Laymen do all over England; particularly under the eye of every Bishop in the nation.

Nay, is it not done in the Universities themselves? Who ordained that singing-man at Christ-Church? Who is likewise utterly unqualified for the work, murdering every lesson he reads? Not even endeavouring to read it as the word of God,
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but rather as an old song? Such a Layman as this, meddling at all with the word of God, I grant is a scandal to the English nation.

To go a step farther.—Do not the fundamental constitutions of the University of Oxford, the statutes, even as revised by Archbishop *Laud*, require every Batchelor of Arts, nine in ten of whom are Laymen, to read three public Lectures in Moral Philosophy, on whatever subject he chuses? My subject, I well remember, was, the Love of God. Now, what was this but Preaching?

Nay, may not a man be a Doctor of Divinity even in Oxford, though he never was ordained at all? The instance of Dr. *Atwell*, (late) Rector of Exeter College, is fresh in every one's memory.

These are a few of the considerations that may readily occur to any thinking man on this head. But I did not rest the cause on these. I believe it may be defended a shorter way.

14. It pleased God by two or three Ministers of the Church of England, to call many sinners to repentance; who, in several parts, were undeniably turned from a course of sin, to a course of holiness.

The Ministers of the places where this was done, ought to have received those Ministers with open arms; and to have taken them who had just begun to serve God, into their peculiar care; watching over them in tender love, lest they should fall back into the snare of the Devil.

Instead of this, the greater part spoke of those Ministers, as if the devil, not God had sent them. Some repelled them from the Lord's Table: others stirred up the people against them, representing them even in their public discourses, as *Fellows not fit to live: Papists, Heretics, Traitors; Conspirators* against their *King and Country*.

And how did they watch over the sinners lately reformed? Even as a Leopard watcheth over his prey. They drove some of them also from the Lord's Table; to which, till now, they had no de-
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fire to approach. They preached all manner of evil concerning them, openly cursing them in the Name of the Lord. They turned many out of their work; persuaded others to do so too, and harassed them all manner of ways.

The event was, That some were wearied out, and so turned back to their vomit again. And then these good Pastors gloried over them, and endeavoured to shake others by their example.

15. When the Ministers by whom God had helped them before, came again to those places, great part of their work was to begin again; if it could be begun again: but the relapsers were often so hardened in sin, that no impression could be made upon them.

What could they do in a case of so extreme necessity? Where so many souls lay at stake?

No Clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was, to find some one among themselves, who was upright of heart, and of sound judgment in the things of God: and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, in order to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation.

God immediately gave a blessing hereto. In several places, by means of these plain men, not only those who had already begun to run well, were hindered from drawing back to perdition; but other sinners also, from time to time, were converted from the error of their ways.

This plain account of the whole proceeding, I take to be the best defence of it. I know no Scripture which forbids making use of such help, in a case of such necessity. And I praise God who has given even this help to those poor sheep, when *their own Shepherds pitied them not.*

“But does not the Scripture say, *No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron?*” Nor do these, The honour here mentioned

mentioned is the Priesthood. But they no more take upon them to be Priests than to be Kings. They take not upon them to administer the Sacraments, an honour peculiar to the Priests of God. Only according to their power, they exhort their brethren, to continue in the grace of God.

“ But for these Laymen to exhort at all, is a violation of all Order.”

What is this Order of which you speak ? Will it serve instead of the knowledge and love of God ? Will this Order rescue those from the snare of the devil, who are now taken captive at his will ? Will it keep them who are escaped a little way, from turning back into Egypt ? If not, how should I answer it to God, if rather than violate I know not what Order, I should sacrifice thousands of souls thereto ? I dare not do it. It is at the peril of my own soul.

Indeed if by Order were meant, *True Christian Discipline*, whereby all the living members of Christ are knit together in one, and all that are putrid and dead, immediately cut off from the body: this Order I reverence; for it is of God. But where is it to be found ? In what diocese ? In what town or parish, within England or Wales ? Are you Rector of a parish ? Then let us go no farther. Does this Order obtain there ? Nothing less. Your parishioners are a rope of sand. As few (if any) of them are alive to God ; so they have no connection with each other, unless such as might be among Turks or Heathens. Neither have you any power to cut off from that body, were it alive, the dead and putrid members. Perhaps you have no desire : but all are jumbled together without any care or concern of yours.

It is plain then, that what Order is to be found, is not among you, who so loudly contend for it, but among that very people whom you continually blame, for their violation and contempt of it. The flock you condemn is united together in one body, by one spirit : so that, *if one member suffers, all the members*

members suffer with it, if one be honoured, all rejoice with it. Nor does any dead member long remain; but as soon as the hope of recovering it is past; it is cut off.

Now suppose we were willing to relinquish our charge, and to give up this flock into your hands; would you observe the same Order, as we do now, with them and the other souls under your care? You dare not: because you have respect of persons. You fear the faces of men. You cannot; because you have not *overcome the world*. You are not above the desire of earthly things. And it is impossible you should ever have any true Order, or exercise any *Christian Discipline*, till you are wholly *crucified to the world*, till you desire nothing more but God.

Consider this matter, I entreat you, a little farther. Here are seven thousand persons (perhaps somewhat more) of whom I take care, watching over their souls as he that must give account. In order hereto it lies upon me (so I judge) at the peril of my own salvation, to know not only their names, but their outward and inward states, their difficulties and dangers. Otherwise how can I know either how to guide them aright, or to commend them to God in prayer? Now if I am willing to make these over to you, will you watch over them in the same manner? Will you take the same care (or as much more as you please) of each soul as I have hitherto done? Not such *Curam Animarum* as you have taken these ten years in your own parish. Poor empty name! has not your parish been in fact, as much a *Sinecure* to you as your *Prebend*? Oh what account have you to give to the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls!

18. There is one more excuse for denying this work of God, taken from the Instruments employed therein: that is, "That they are wicked men." And a thousand stories have been handed about to prove it.

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But you may observe, their wickedness was not heard of, till after they went about doing good. Their reputation for honesty was till then unblemished. But it was impossible it should continue so, when they were publicly employed in *testifying of the world, that its deeds were evil*. It could not be but the Scriptures should be fulfilled. *The Servant is not above his Master. If they had called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?*

Yet I cannot but remind considerate men, in how remarkable a manner the wisdom of God has for many years guarded against this pretence, with respect to my Brother and me in particular. Scarce any two men in *Great Britain*, of our rank, have been so held out, as it were to all the world: especially of those who from their childhood had always loved and studiously sought retirement. And I had procured what I sought, I was quite safe, as I supposed, in a little country town, when I was required to return to *Oxford*, without delay, to take the charge of some young gentleman, by Dr. *Morley*, the only man then in *England* to whom I could deny nothing. From that time both my Brother and I (utterly against our will) came to be more and more observed and known, till we were more spoken of, than, perhaps, two so inconsiderable persons ever were before in the nation. To make us more public still, as honest madmen at least, by a strange concurrence of Providences, overturning all our preceding resolutions, we were hurried away to *America*. However, at our return from thence, we were resolved to retire out of the world at once; being sated with noise, hurry and fatigue, and seeking nothing but to be at rest. Indeed for a long season, the greatest pleasure I had desired, on this side eternity was

*Tacitum Sylvas inter reptare salubres,
Quarentem quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque.*

And

And we had attained our desire. We wanted nothing. We looked for nothing more in this world, when we were dragged out again, by earnest importunity, to preach at one place and another, and another, and so carried on, we knew not how, without any design but the general one, of saving souls, into a situation, which had it been named to us at first, would have appeared far worse than death.

19. What a surprising apparatus of Providence was here! And what stronger demonstrations could have been given, of men's acting from a zeal for God, whether it were according to knowledge or no? What persons could, in the nature of things, have been (antecedently) less liable to exception, with regard to their moral character, at least, than those the All-wise God had employed? Indeed I cannot devise what manner of men could have been more unexceptionable on all accounts. Had God indued us with greater natural or acquired abilities, that very thing might have been turned into an objection. Had we been remarkably defective, it would have been matter of objection, on the other hand. Had we been Dissenters of any kind, or even Low-Church Men, (so called) it would have been a great stumbling-block in the way of those who are zealous for the Church. And yet had we continued in the impetuosity of our High-Church zeal, neither should we have been willing to converse with Dissenters, nor they to receive any good at our hands. Some objections were kept out of the way, by our known contempt of money and preferment: and others, by that rigorous strictness of life, which we exacted, not of others, but ourselves only. Inasmuch, that twelve or fourteen years ago, the censure of one who had narrowly observed us, (me, in particular) went no farther than this:

“ Does *J*— beyond his strength persist to go,
To his frail carcase literally see?

L 2

Careless

Careless of health, as if in haste to die,
And lavish time to insure eternity !”

So that upon the whole, I see not what God could have done more in this respect which he hath not done. Or what Instruments he could have employed in such a work, who would have been less liable to exception.

20. Neither can I conceive how it was possible to do that work, the doing of which, we are still under the strongest conviction, is bound upon us at the peril of our own souls, in a less exceptionable manner. We have, by the grace of God, behaved not only with meekness, but with all tenderness towards all men; with all the tenderness which we conceived it was possible to use without betraying their souls. And from the very first, it has been our special care, to deal tenderly with our brethren of the Clergy. We have not willingly provoked them at any time; neither any single Clergyman. We have not sought occasion to publish their faults; we have not used a thousand occasions that offered. When we were constrained to speak something, we spake as little as we believed we could, without offending God: and that little, though in plain and strong words, yet as mildly and lovingly as we were able. And in the same course we have steadily persevered (as well as in earnestly advising others to tread in our steps) even though we saw that with regard to them, by all this we profited nothing; though we knew we were still continually represented as *implacable enemies to the Clergy*, as railers against them, as slanderers of them, as seeking all opportunities to blacken and asperse them. When a Clergyman himself has vehemently accused me of doing this, I bless God he could not provoke me to do it. I still kept my mouth as it were with a bridle, and committed my cause to a higher hand.

21. The truth is, you impute that hatred to us, which is in your own breast. (I speak not this of all

all the Clergy; God forbid! But let it fall on whom it concerns.) You, it is certain, have shewn the utmost hatred to us, and in every possible way: unless you were actually to beat us (of which also we are not without precedent) or to shoot us through the head. And if you could prevail upon others to do this, I suppose you would think you did God service. I do not speak without ground. I have heard with my own ears such sermons (in *Staffordshire* particularly) that I should not have wondered if as soon as we came out of the Church, the people had stoned me with stones. And it was a natural consequence of what that poor Minister had lately heard, at the Bishop's Visitation: as it was one great cause of the miserable riots and outrages which soon followed.

It is this, my brethren, it is your own preaching, and not ours, which sets the people against you. The very same persons, who are diverted with those sermons, cannot but despise you for them in their hearts: even those who on your authority believe most of the assertions which you advance. What then must they think of you, who know the greatest part of what you assert to be utterly false? They may pity and pray for you; but they can esteem you no other, than false witnesses against God and your brethren.

22. "But what need is there (say even some of a milder spirit) of this preaching in fields and streets? Are there not Churches enough to preach in?" No, my friend, there are not; not for us to preach in. You forget: we are not suffered to preach there; else we should prefer them to any places whatever. "Well, there are Ministers enough without you." Ministers enough, and Churches enough; for what? To reclaim all the sinners within the four seas? If there were, they would all be reclaimed. But they are not reclaimed. Therefore it is evident, there are not Churches enough. And one plain reason why, notwithstanding all these Churches, they are no

nearer being reclaimed is this; they never come into a Church; perhaps not once in a twelve-month, perhaps not for many years together. Will you say (as I have known some tender hearted Christians) "then it is their own fault; let them die and be damned." I grant it is their own fault. And so it was my fault and yours, when we went astray, like sheep that were lost. Yet the Shepherd of Souls sought after us, and went after us into the wilderness. And *oughtest not thou to have compassion on thy fellow servants, as he had pity on thee?* Ought not we also to seek, as far as in us lies, and to save that which is lost?

Behold the amazing love of God to the outcasts of men! His tender condescension to their folly! They would regard nothing done in the usual way. All this was lost upon them. The ordinary preaching of the word of God, they would not even deign to hear. So the devil made sure of these careless ones. For who should pluck them out of his hand? Then God was moved to jealousy, and went out of the usual way to save the souls which he had made. Then over and above what was ordinarily spoken in his Name, in all the houses of God in the land, he commanded a voice to cry in the wilderness, *prepare ye the way of the Lord. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel.*

23. Consider coolly, if it was not highly expedient, that something of this kind should be? How expedient, were it only on the account of those poor sinners against their own souls, who (to all human appearance) were utterly inaccessible every other way? And what numbers of these are still to be found, even in or near our most populous cities? What multitudes of them were some years since, both in *Kingswood*, and the Fells about *Newcastle*? Who, week after week, spent the Lord's day, either in the ale-house, or in idle diversions, and never troubled themselves about going to Church, or to any public worship at all?

Now,

Now, would you really have desired that these poor wretches should have sinned on, till they dropped into hell? Surely you would not. But by what other means was it possible they should have been plucked out of the fire? Had the Minister of the parish preached like an angel, it had profited them nothing; for they heard him not. But when one came and said, "Yonder is a man preaching on the top of the mountain, they ran in droves to hear what he would say. And God spoke to their hearts. It is hard to conceive any thing else which could have reached them. Had it not been for Field-preaching, the uncommonness of which was the very circumstance that recommended it, they must have run on in the error of their way, and perished in their blood.

24. But suppose Field-preaching to be in a case of this kind, ever so expedient, or even necessary, yet who will contest with us for this province?—May we not enjoy this quiet and unmolested? Unmolested, I mean by any competitors——For who is there among you, brethren, that is willing (examine your own hearts) even to save souls from death at this price? Would not you let a thousand souls perish, rather than you would be in the instrument of rescuing them thus? I do not speak now with regard to conscience, but to the inconveniences that must accompany it. Can you sustain them, if you would? Can you bear the summer sun to beat upon your naked head? Can you suffer the wintry rain or wind, from whatever quarter it blows? Are you able to stand in the open air, without any covering or defence, when God casteth abroad his snow like wool, or scattereth his hoarfrost like ashes? And yet these are some of the smallest inconveniences which accompany Field-preaching. For beyond all these, are the contradiction of sinners, the scoffs both of the great vulgar, and the small; contempt and reproach of every kind; often more than verbal affronts, stupid, brutal violence, sometimes to the hazard of health,
or

or limbs, or life. Brethren, do you envy us this honour? What I pray, would buy you to be a Field-Preacher? Or what, think you could induce any man of common sense, to continue therein one year, unless he had a full conviction in himself, that it was the will of God concerning him?

Upon this conviction it is (were we to submit to these things on any other motive whatsoever, it would furnish you with a better proof of our distraction than any that has yet been found) that we now do, for the good of our souls, what you cannot, will not, dare not do. And we desire not that you should; but this one thing, we may reasonably desire of you; do not increase the difficulties which are already so great, that without the mighty power of God, we must sink under them. Do not assist in trampling down a little handful of men, who for the present stand in the gap, between ten thousand poor wretches and destruction, till you find some others to take their places.

25. Highly needful it is, that some should do this, lest those poor souls be left without remedy. And it should rejoice the hearts of all who desire the kingdom of God should come, that so many of them have been snatched already from the mouth of the lion, by an uncommon (though not unlawful) way. This circumstance therefore is no just excuse, for not acknowledging the work of God. Especially, if we consider, that whenever it has pleased God to work any great work upon the earth, even from the earliest times, he hath stepped more or less out of the common way: whether to excite the attention of a greater number of people, than might otherwise have regarded it; or to separate the proud and haughty of heart, from those of an humble, child-like spirit: the former of whom he foresaw, trusting in their own wisdom, would fall on that stone and be broken; while the latter,

latter, enquiring with simplicity, would soon know of the work, that it was of God.

26. "Nay (some say) but God is a God of wisdom. And it is his work, to give understanding. Whereas this man is one of them, and he is a fool. You see the fruits of their preaching." No, my friend, you do not. That is your mistake. A fool very possibly he may be. So it appears by his talking, perhaps writing too. But this is none of the fruits of our preaching. He was a fool before ever he heard us. We found and are likely to leave him so. Therefore his folly is not to be imputed to us, even if it continue to the day of his death. As we were not the cause, so we undertake not the cure of disorders of this kind. No fair man therefore can excuse himself thus, from acknowledging the work of God.

Perhaps you will say, "He is not a natural fool neither. But he is so ignorant! He knows not the first principles of Religion." It is very possible. But have patience with him, and he will know them by and by. Yea, if he be in earnest to save his soul, far sooner than you can conceive. And in the mean time, neither is this an objection of any weight. Many when they begin to hear us, may, without any fault of ours, be utter strangers to the whole of Religion. But this is no incurable disease. Yet a little while and they may be wise unto salvation.

Is the ignorance you complain of among this people (you who object to the people more than to their Teachers) of another kind! Do not they "know, how in meekness to reprove or instruct those that oppose themselves?" I believe what you say: all of them do not: they have not put on gentleness and long-suffering. I wish they had: pray for them that they may; that they may be mild and patient toward all men. But what if they are not? Sure you do not make this an argument that God hath not sent us? Our Lord came, and we come, *not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance:*

repentance : passionate sinners, (such as these whereof you complain) as well as those of every other kind. Nor can it be expected they should be wholly delivered from their sin, as soon as they begin to hear his word.

27. A greater stumbling-block than this is laid before you, by those that say and do not. Such I take it for granted will be among us, although we purge them out as fast as we can : persons that talk much of Religion, that commend the Preachers, perhaps are diligent in hearing them : it may be, read all their books, and sing their hymns ; and yet no change is wrought in their hearts. Were they of old time as lions in their houses ? They are the same still. Were they (in low life) slothful or intemperate ? Were they tricking or dishonest ? over-reaching or oppressive ? Or did they use to borrow and not pay ? *The Ethiopian hath not changed his skin.* Were they (in high life) delicate, tender, self-indulgent ? Were they nice in furniture or apparel ? Were they fond of trifles, or of their own dear persons ? *The Leopard hath not changed her spots.* Yet their being with us for a time proves no more, than that we have not the miraculous discernment of spirits.

Others you may find in whom there was a real change. But it was only for a season. They are now turned back, and are twofold more the children of hell than before. Yet neither is this any manner of proof, that the former work was not of God. No, not though these apostates should, with the utmost confidence, say all manner of evil against us. I expect they should. For every other injury hath been forgiven, and will be to the end of the world. But hardly shall any one forgive the intolerable injury, of *almost persuading him to be a Christian.* When these men therefore who were with us, but went out from among us, assert things that may cause your ears to tingle, if you consider either the Scripture, or the nature of man, it will not stagger you at all. Much less
will

will it excuse you, for not acknowledging the work in general to be of God.

28. But to all this it may possibly be replied, "When you bring your credentials with you, when you prove by miracles what you assert, then we will acknowledge that God hath sent you."

What is it you would have us prove by miracles? That the Doctrines we preach are true? This is not the way to prove that: (as our first Reformers replied to those of the Church of *Rome*, who, you may probably remember, were continually urging them with this very demand.) We prove the Doctrines we preach, by Scripture and Reason; and if need be, by Antiquity.

What else is it then we are to prove by Miracles?

Is it, 1. That *A. B.* was for many years without God in the world, a common swearer, a drunkard, a sabbath-breaker?

Or, 2. That he is not so now?

Or, 3. That he continued so till he heard us preach, and from that time was another man?

Not so. The proper way to prove these facts, is by the testimony of competent witnesses: and these witnesses are ready, whenever required, to give full evidence of them.

Or would you have us prove by miracles,

4. That this was not done by our own power or holiness? That God only is able to raise the dead, those who are dead in trespasses and sins? Nay, if you hear not Moses and the Prophets and Apostles on this head, neither would you believe though one rose from the dead.

It is therefore utterly unreasonable and absurd, to require or expect the proof of miracles, in questions of such a kind, as are always decided, by proofs of quite another nature.

29. "But you relate them yourself." I relate just what I saw, from time to time: and this is true,

true, that some of those circumstances seem to go beyond the ordinary course of nature. But I do not peremptorily determine, whether they were supernatural, or no? Much less do I rest upon them, either the proof of other facts, or those of the doctrines which I preach. I prove these in the ordinary way; the one by Testimony, the other by Scripture and Reason.

“ But if you can work miracles when you please, is not this the surest way of proving them? This would put the matter out of dispute at once, and supersede all other proof.”

You seem to lie under an entire mistake, both to the nature and use of miracles. It may reasonably be questioned, whether there ever was that man living upon earth, except the man Christ Jesus, that could work miracles when he pleased. God only, when he pleased, exerted that power, and by whomsoever it pleased him.

But if a man could work miracles when he pleased, yet is there no Scripture-authority, nor even example for doing it in order to satisfy such a demand as this. I do not read, that either our Lord or any of his Apostles, wrought any miracle on such an occasion. Nay, how sharply does our Lord rebuke those who made a demand of this kind? When *certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee;* (observe, this was their method of answering the strong reasons whereby he had just proved the works in question to be of God!) *He answered and said to them, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. But there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas,* Matt. xii. 28, 39. *An evil and adulterous generation!* Else they would not have needed such a kind of proof. Had they been willing to do his will, they would, without this, have known that the doctrine was of God.

Miracles therefore are quite needless in such a case. Nor are they so conclusive a proof as you imagine.

imagine. If a man could and did work them, in defence of any doctrine, yet this would not supercede other proof. For there may be *τεράτα Ψευδία*, lying Wonders, miracles wrought in support of falsehood. Still therefore this Doctrine would remain to be proved, from the proper topics of Scripture and Reason. And these even without Miracles are sufficient. But Miracles without these are not. Accordingly our Saviour and all his Apostles, in the midst of their greatest miracles, never failed to prove every Doctrine they taught, by clear Scripture and cogent Reason.

30. I presume, by this time you may perceive the gross absurdity, of demanding Miracles in the present case: seeing one of the propositions in question, (over and above our general Doctrines) viz. "That sinners are reformed," can only be proved by Testimony: and the other, "This cannot be done but by the power of God, needs no proof, being self-evident.

"Why, I did once myself rejoice to hear, (says a grave citizen, with an air of great importance) that so many sinners were reformed, till I found they were only turned from one wickedness to another; that they were turned from cursing or swearing, or drunkenness, into the no less damnable sin of *Schism*."

Do you know what you say? You have, I am afraid, a confused huddle of ideas in your head. And I doubt, you have not capacity to clear them up yourself; nor coolness enough, to receive help from others.

However I will try. What is *Schism*? Have you any determinate idea of it? I ask the rather because I have found, by repeated experiments, that a common English tradesman receives no more light, when he hears or reads, "This is *Schism*," than if he heard or read,

Bombalio, stridor, clangor, taratantara, murmur.

M

Honest

Honest neighbour do not be angry. Lay down your hammer, and let us talk a little on this head.

You say, "We are in the damnable sin of Schism, and therefore in as bad a state as Adulterers and Murders."

I ask once more, what do you mean by Schism? "Schism! Schism! Why, it is separating from the Church." Ay, so it is. And yet every separating from the Church to which we once belonged, is not Schism. Else you will make all the English to be Schismatics, in separating from the Church of Rome. "But we had just cause." So doubtless we had: whereas Schism is a causeless separation from the Church of Christ. So far so good. But you have many steps to take before you can make good that conclusion, that a separation from a particular National Church, such as the Church of England is, whether with sufficient cause or without, comes under the scriptural notion of Schism.

However, taking this for granted, will you aver in cool blood, That every one who dies a Quaker, a Baptist, an Independant, or a Presbyterian, is as infallibly damned as if he died in the act of murder or adultery? Surely you start at the thought! It makes even nature recoil. How then can you reconcile it to the Love that hopeth all things?

31. But whatever state they are in, who causelessly separate from the Church of England, it affects not those of whom we are speaking; for they do not separate from it at all.

You may easily be convinced of this, if you will only weigh the particulars following.

1. A great part of these went to no Church at all, before they heard us preach. They no more pretended to belong to the Church of England, than to the Church of Muscovy. If therefore they went to no Church now, they would be no farther from the Church than they were before.

2. Those who did sometimes go to Church before; go three times as often now. These therefore do not separate from the Church. Nay, they are united to it more closely than before.

3. Those

3. Those who never went to Church at all before, do go now at all opportunities. Will common sense allow any one to say, that these are separated from the Church?

4. The main question is, Are they turned from doing the works of the devil, to do the works of God? Do they now live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world? If they do, if they live according to the Directions of the Church, believe her Doctrines, and join in her Ordinances: with what face can you say, that these men separate from the Church of England?

32. But in what state are they whom the Clergy and Gentry (and perhaps you for one) have successfully laboured to preserve from this damnable sin of Schism? Whom you have kept from hearing these men, and separating from the Church?

Is not the drunkard that was, a drunkard still? Enquire of his poor wife and family. Is not the common swearer still horribly crying to God for damnation upon his own soul. Is not the sinner in every other kind, exactly the same man still? Not better at least, if he be not worse, than he was ten years ago.

Now consider, 1. Does the Church of England gain either honour, or strength, or blessing, by such wretches as these calling themselves her Members? By ten thousand Drunkards, or Whoremongers, or Common Swearers? Nay, ought she not immediately to spew them out? To renounce all fellowship with them? Would she not be far better without them than with them? Let any man of reason judge.

2. Is this Drunkard's calling himself of the Church of England, of any more use to him, than to the Church? Will this save him from hell, if he die in his sin? Will it not rather increase his damnation?

3. Is not a Drunkard of any other Church, just as good as a drunkard of the Church of England?

Yea, is not a drunken Papist as much in the favour of God, as a drunken Protestant?

4. Is not a cursing, swearing Turk, (if there be such an one to be found) full as acceptable to God, as a cursing, swearing Christian?

Nay, 5. If there be any advantage, does it not lie on the side of the former? Is he not the less inexcusable of the two? As sinning against less light?

O why will you sink these poor souls deeper into perdition, than they are sunk already? Why will you prophesy unto them Peace, Peace; when there is no Peace? Why, if you do it not yourself (whether you cannot, or will not; God knoweth) should you hinder us from guiding them into the way of Peace?

33. Will you endeavour to excuse yourself by saying, "there are not many who are the better for your preaching: and these by and by will be as bad as ever; as such and such an one is already?"

I would to God I could set this in a just light! But I cannot. All language fails.

God begins a glorious work in our land. You set yourself against it with all your might; to prevent its beginning where it does not yet appear, and to destroy it wherever it does. In part you prevail. You keep many from hearing the word that is able to save their souls. Others who had heard it, you induce to turn back from God, and to list under the devil's banner again. Then you make the success of your own wickedness an excuse for not acknowledging the work of God! You urge "that not many sinners were reformed! And that some of those are now as bad as ever!"

Whose fault is this? Is it ours? Or your own? Why have not thousands more been reformed? Yea, for every one who is now turned to God, why are there not ten thousand? Because you and your associates laboured so heartily in the cause of hell; because you and they spared no pains, either to prevent or to destroy the work of God! By
using

using all the power and wisdom you had, you hindered thousands from hearing the Gospel, which they might have found to be the power of God unto salvation. Their blood is upon your heads. By inventing, or countenancing, or retailing lies, some refined, some gross and palpable, you hindered others from profiting by what they did hear. You are answerable to God for these souls also. Many who began to taste the good word, and run the way of God's commandments, you, by various methods, prevailed on to hear it no more. So they soon drew back to perdition. But know, that for every one of these also, God will require an account of you in the day of judgment.

34. And yet, in spite of all the malice, and wisdom, and strength, not only of men, but of *Principlities and Powers, of the Rulers of the Darknesh of this World, of the wicked Spirits in high places*; there are thousands found, who are turned from dumb idols, to serve the living and true God. What a harvest then might we have seen before now, if all who say, they are *on the Lord's side*, had come, as in all reason they ought, *to the help of the Lord against the Mighty*? Yea, had they only not opposed the work of God, had they only refrained from his Messengers; might not the trumpet of God have been heard long since in every corner of our land? And thousands of sinners in every county been brought to *fear God and honour the King*.

Judge of what immense service we might have been, even in this single point, both to our King and Country. All who hear and regard the word we preach, *honour the King for God's sake*. They *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's as well as unto God the things that are God's*.—They have no conception of piety without loyalty; knowing *the powers that be, are ordained of God*. I pray God to strengthen all that are of this mind, how many soever they be. But might there not have been

at this day, a hundred thousand in *England*, thus minded more than are now? Yea verily; even by our Ministry, had not they who should have strengthened us, weakened our hands.

35. Surely you are not wise! What advantages do you throw away! What opportunities do you lose? Such as another day you may earnestly seek, and nevertheless may not find them. For if it please God to remove us, whom will you find to supply our place? We are in all things your servants for Jesus' sake; though the more we love you, the less we are loved. Let us be employed not in the highest, but in the meanest; and not in the easiest, but in the hottest service. Ease and plenty we leave to those that want them. Let us go on in toil, in weariness, in painfulness, in cold or hunger, so we may but testify the Gospel of the grace of God. The rich, the honourable, the great, we are thoroughly willing (if it be the will of our Lord) to leave to you. Only let us alone with the poor, the vulgar, the base, the outcasts of men—Take also to yourselves the Saints of the world; but suffer us to call sinners to repentance; even the most vile, the most ignorant, the most abandoned, the most fierce and savage of whom we can hear. To these we will go forth in the name of our Lord, desiring nothing, receiving nothing of any man (save the bread we eat, while we are under his roof) and let it be seen, whether God hath sent us. Only, let not your hands, who fear the Lord, be upon us. Why should we be stricken of you any more?

IV. 1. Surely ye are without excuse, all who do not yet know the day of your visitation! The day, wherein the great God, who hath been forgotten among us, days without number, is arising at once to be avenged of his adversaries, and to visit and redeem his people. And are not his judgments and mercies both abroad? And still, will ye not learn righteousness? Is not the Lord passing by?

Doth

Doth not a great and strong wind already begin to rend the mountains, and to break in pieces the rocks before the Lord? Is not the earthquake also felt already? And a fire hath begun to burn in his anger. Who knoweth what will be the end thereof? But at the same time, he is speaking to man in a still, small voice. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, lest he be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy!

2. What excuse can possibly be made for those, who are regardless of such a season as this? Who are at such a crisis, stupid, senseless, unapprehensive; caring for none of these things? Who do not give themselves the pains to think about them, but are still easy and unconcerned? What! can there ever be a point, on which it more behoves you to think? And that with the coolest and deepest attention? As long as the heaven and the earth remain, can there be any thing of so vast importance, as God's Last Call to a guilty land, just perishing in its iniquity!

You, with those round about you, deserved long ago to have *drank the dregs of the cup of trembling*: yea, to have been *punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*. But he hath not dealt with you according to your sins, neither rewarded you after your iniquities. And once more he is mixing mercy with judgment. Once more he is crying aloud, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel*; and will you not deign to give him the hearing? If you are not careful to answer him in this matter. Do you still shut your eyes, and stop your ears, and harden your stubborn heart?—Oh beware, lest God laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh!

3. Will you plead, that you have other concerns to mind? That other business engages your thoughts? It does so indeed; but this is your foolishness; this is the very thing that leaves you without

without excuse.—For what business can be of equal moment? The mariner may have many concerns to mind, and many businesses to engage his thoughts: but not when the ship is sinking. In such a circumstance (it is your own) you have but one thing to think of. Save the ship and your own life together! And the higher post you are in, the more deeply intent should you be on this one point. Is this a time for diversions? For eating and drinking, and rising up to play? Keep the ship above water. Let all else go, and mind *This one thing!*

4. Perhaps you will say, "So I do. I do mind this one thing, how to save the sinking nation. And therefore now I must think of Arms and Provisions. I have no time now to think of Religion." This is exactly as if the mariner should say, "Now I must think of my Guns and Stores. I have no time now to think of the Hold." Why man, you must think of this, or perish. It is there the Leak is sprung. Stop that, or you and all your Stores will go together to the bottom of the sea.

Is not this your very case? Then, whatever you do, stop the Leak: else you go to the bottom! I do not speak against your Stores. They are good in their kind; and it may be well they are laid in.—But all your Stores will not save the sinking ship, unless you can stop the Leak. Unless you can some way keep out these floods of ungodliness, that are still continually pouring in, you must soon be swallowed up in the great deep, in the Abyss of God's judgments. This, this is the destruction of the *English* nation. It is vice bursting in on every side, that is just ready to sink us into slavery first, and then into the nethermost hell.—*Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you?* Let him think of this. Think of this, all that love your country, or care for your own souls. If now especially you do not think of this one thing, you have no excuse before God or man.

5. Little

5. Little more excuse have you, who are still in doubt concerning this day of your visitation. For you have all the proof that you can reasonably expect or desire, all that the nature of the thing requires. That in many places, abundance of notorious sinners are totally reformed, is declared by a thousand eye and ear-witnesses, both of their present and past behaviour. And you are sensible, the proof of such a point as this must, in the nature of things, rest upon testimony. And that God alone is able to work such a reformation, you know all the Scriptures testify. What would you have more? What pretence can you have, for doubting any longer? You have not the least room to expect or desire any other, or any stronger evidence.

I trust, you are not of those who fortify themselves against conviction; who are "resolved they will never believe this." They ask, "who are these men?" We tell them plainly: but they credit us not. Another and another of their own friends is convinced, and tells them the same thing. But their answer is ready, "Are you turned Methodist too?" So their testimony likewise goes for nothing. Now how is it possible these should ever be convinced? For they will believe none but those who speak on one side.

6. Do you delay fixing your judgment, till you see a work of God, without any stumbling-block attending it? That never was yet, nor ever will. *It must needs be, that offences will come.* And scarce ever was there such a work of God before, with so few as have attended this.

When the Reformation began, what mountainous offences lay in the way, of even the sincere Members of the Church of *Rome*? They saw such failings in those great men, *Luther* and *Calvin*? Their vehement tenaciousness of their own opinions; their bitterness towards all who differed from them; their impatience of contradiction, and utter want of forbearance, even with their own brethren.

But

But the grand stumbling-block of all, was, their opened avowed separation from the Church; their rejecting so many of the doctrines and practices, which the others accounted the most sacred; and their continual invectives against the Church they separated from, so much sharper than *Michael's* reproof of Satan.

Were there fewer stumbling-blocks attending the Reformation in *England*? Surely no; for what was *Henry* the Eighth? Consider, either his Character, his motives to the work, or his manner of pursuing it! And even King *Edward's* Ministry we cannot clear of persecuting in their turns, yea, and burning Heretics. The main stumbling-block also still remained, viz. open separation from the Church.

7. Full as many were the offences that lay in the way of even the sincere Members of the Church of *England*, when the people called Quakers first professed, that they were sent of God to reform the land. Whether they were or no, is beside our question: it suffices for the present purpose to observe, that over and above their open, avowed, total separation from the Church, and their vehement invectives against many of her Doctrines, and the whole frame of her Discipline; they spent their main strength in disputing about Opinions and Externalst, rather than in preaching faith, mercy, and the love of God.

In these respects, the case was nearly the same when the Baptists first appeared in *England*. They immediately commenced a warm dispute, not concerning the vitals of Christianity, but concerning the manner and time of administering one of the external Ordinances of it. And as their Opinion hereof totally differed from that of all the other Members of the Church of *England*, so they soon openly declared their separation from it, not without sharp censures of those that continued therein.

8. The

8. The same occasion of offence was, in a smaller degree, given by the Presbyterians and Independants: for they also spent great part of their time and strength, in opposing the commonly received Opinions concerning some of the circumstantialia of Religion; and for the sake of these, separated from the Church.

But I do not include that venerable man, Mr. *Philip Henry*, nor any that were of his spirit, in this number. I know they abhorred contending about Externals. Neither did they separate themselves from the Church. They continued therein, till they were driven out, whether they would or no. I cannot but tenderly sympathize with these; and the more, because this is, in part, our own case. Warm men spare no pains, at this very day, to drive us out of the Church. They cry out to the people, wherever one of us comes, "a Mad Dog, a Mad Dog!" if haply we might fly for our lives, as many have done before us. And sure it is, we should have complied with their desire, we should merely for peace and quietness have left the Church long before now, but that we could not in conscience do it. And it is on this single motive, it is for conscience sake that we still continue therein; and shall continue (God being our helper) unless they by violence thrust us out.

9. But to return. What are the stumbling-blocks in the present case, compared to those in any of the preceding?

We do not dispute concerning any of the externals or circumstantialia of Religion. There is no room; for we agree with you therein. We approve of, and adhere to them all; all that we learned together when we were children, in our Catechism and Common-Prayer Book. We were born and bred up in your own Church, and desire to die therein. We always were, and are now, zealous for the Church; only not with a blind, angry zeal. We hold, and ever have done, the
same

same opinions, which you and we received from our forefathers. But we do not lay the main stress of our Religion on any Opinions, right or wrong: neither do we ever begin, or willingly join in any dispute concerning them. The weight of all Religion, we apprehend, rests on Holiness of Heart and Life. And consequently, wherever we come, we press this with all our might. How wide then is the difference between our case and the case of any of those that are above-mentioned? They avowedly separated from the Church: we utterly disavow any such design. They severely, and almost continually, inveighed against the Doctrines and Discipline of the Church they left. We approve both the Doctrines and Discipline of our Church, and inveigh only against Ungodliness and Unrighteousness. They spent great part of their time and strength in contending about Externals and Circumstantials. We agree with you in both; so that having no room to spend any time in such vain Contention, we have our desire of spending and being spent, in promoting plain practical Religion. How many stumbling-blocks are removed out of your way? Why do not you acknowledge the work of God?

10. If you say, "Because you hold Opinions which I cannot believe are true;" I answer, believe them true or false; I will not quarrel with you about any Opinion. Only see that your heart be right towards God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your Neighbour, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of Opinions: I am weary to bear them. My soul loaths this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial Religion. Give me an humble, gentle Lover of God and Man; a man full of Mercy and good Fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy: a man laying himself out in the Work of Faith, the Patience of Hope, the Labour of Love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever Opinion they

they are of. *Whosoever thus doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother.*

11. Inexcusably insatuated must you be, if you can even doubt whether the propagation of this Religion be of God! Only more inexcusable are those unhappy men, who oppose, contradict and blaspheme it.

How long will you stop your ears against him, that still crieth, *Why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks; for a man to contend with his Maker.* How long will you despise the well-known advice of a great and learned Man, *Refrain from these men, and let them alone. If this work be of man, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.* And why should you be found even to fight against God? If a man fight with God, shall he prevail? *Canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Make haste! Fall down! Humble thyself before him. Lest he put forth his hand, and thou perish.*

12. How long will you fight under the banner of the great Enemy of God and man? You are now in his service: you are taking part with the Devil against God. Even supposing there were no other proof, this would undeniably appear, from the goodly company among whom you are enlisted, and who war one and the same warfare. I have heard some affirm, that the most bitter enemies to the present work of God, were Pharisees. They meant, men who had the form of godliness, but denied the power of it. But I cannot say so. The sharpest adversaries thereof whom I have hitherto known (unless one might except a few honourable men, whom I may be excused from naming) were the Scum of Cornwall, the Rabble of Bilston and Darleston; the wild Beasts of Walsal, and the Turnkeys of Newgate.

13. Might not the very sight of these Troops, shew any reasonable man, to what General they belonged? As well as the weapons they never

fail to use; the most horrid Oaths and Execrations; and lawless Violence, carrying away as a flood whatsoever it is which stands before it: having no eyes, nor ears, no regard to the loudest cries of Reason, Justice or Humanity: can you join heart or hands with these any longer? With such an infamous, scandalous Rabble-rout, roaring and raging, as if they were just broke loose, with their Captain *Apollyon*, from the bottomless pit? Does it not rather concern you, and that in the highest degree, as well as every friend to his King and Country, every lover of Peace, Justice and Mercy, immediately to join and stop any such godless crews, as they would join to stop a fire just beginning to spread, or an inundation of the sea?

14. If on the contrary, you join with that godless crew, and strengthen their hands in their wickedness, must not you, in all reason, be accounted, (like them) a public enemy of mankind? And indeed such must every one appear, in the eye of unprejudiced Reason, who opposes directly or indirectly, the Reformation of mankind. By Reformation I mean, the bringing them back (not to this or that system of Opinions, or to this or that set of Rites and Ceremonies, how decent and significant soever; but) to the calm Love of God and one another, to an uniform practice of Justice, Mercy and Truth. With what colour can you lay any claim to Humanity, to Benevolence, to public Spirit, if you can once open you mouth, or stir one finger, against such a Reformation as this?

It is a poor excuse to say, "O, but the people are brought into several erroneous Opinions." It matters not a straw, whether they are or no: (I speak of such Opinions as do not touch the foundation) it is scarce worth while to spend ten words about it. Whether they embrace this religious Opinion or that, is no more concern to me, than whether they embrace this or that system of Astronomy. Are they brought to holy Tempers and holy Lives? This is mine, and should be your enquiry.

quiry; since on this, both social and personal happiness depend: happiness, temporal and eternal. Are they brought to the Love of God and the Love of their Neighbour? Pure Religion and undefiled is this, how long then will you darken counsel, by words without knowledge? The plain Religion now propagated is LOVE. And can you oppose this, without being an enemy to mankind?

15. No; nor without being an enemy to your King and Country: especially at such a time as this. For however men of no thought may not see or regard it, or hectoring cowards may brave it out, it is evident to every man of calm reflection, that our Nation stands on the very brink of destruction. And why are we thus, but because *the cry of our wickedness is gone up to heaven?* Because we have so exceedingly, abundantly, beyond measure, corrupted our ways before the Lord. And because, to all our other abominations we have added, the open fighting against God; the not only rejecting, but even denying, yea, blaspheming his last offers of mercy; the hindering others who were desirous to close therewith; the despitefully using his Messengers, and the variously troubling and oppressing those who did accept of his grace, break off their sins, and turn to him with their whole heart.

16. I cannot but believe, it is chiefly on this account, that God hath now *a controversy with our land.* And must not any considerate man be inclined to form the same judgment, if he reviews the state of public affairs, for only a few years last past? I will not enter into particulars. But, in general, can you possibly help observing, that whenever there has been any thing like a public attempt, to suppress *this new Sect*, (for so it was artfully represented) another and another public trouble arose. This has been repeated so often, that it is surprising any man of sense can avoid taking notice of it. May we turn at length to him *that smiteth us, hear the Red,* and him *that appointeth it!* May we humble ourselves under the mighty

fail to use; the most horrid Oaths and Execrations, and lawless Violence, carrying away as a flood whatsoever it is which stands before it: having no eyes, nor ears, no regard to the loudest cries of Reason, Justice or Humanity: can you join heart or hands with these any longer? With such an infamous, scandalous Rabble-rout, roaring and raging, as if they were just broke loose, with their Captain *Apollyon*, from the bottomless pit? Does it not rather concern you, and that in the highest degree, as well as every friend to his King and Country, every lover of Peace, Justice and Mercy, immediately to join and stop any such godless crews, as they would join to stop a fire just beginning to spread, or an inundation of the sea?

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mighty hand of God, before the great deep swallow us up!

17. Just now, viz. on the 4th of this instant December, the Reverend Mr. *Henry Wickham*, one of his Majesty's Justices of Peace for the West-Riding of *Yorkshire* writes an order,

To the Constable of *Kighley*, commanding him, "to convey the body of *Jonathan Reeves*, (whose real crime is, the calling Sinners to repentance) to his Majesty's Goal and Castle of *York*; suspected (saith the Precept) of being a Spy among us, and a dangerous man to the person and government of his Majesty King *George*."

God avert the Omen! I fear this is no presage either of the Repentance or Deliverance of our poor Nation!

18. If we will not turn and repent, if we will harden our hearts, and acknowledge neither his Judgments nor Mercies; what remains but the fulfilling of that dreadful word, which God spake by the Prophet *Ezekiel*; *Son of man, when the land sinneth against me, by trespassing grievously; then will I stretch forth my hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof.*—*Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, "Sword, go through the land:"—Or if I send a Pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood:—Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness,* Ch. xiv. ver. 13, 14, 17, 19, 20.

Yet behold, therein shall be left a Remnant, that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters.—And ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem.—And ye shall know that I have not done without cause, all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God. Ver. 22, 23.

LONDON, Dec. 18, 1745.



